

Activity Report

European Federation of Nurses' Associations
Working Year 2020



Table of Contents

Abbreviations.....	p. 3
Executive Summary	p. 5
Foreword	p. 8
I. EFN Key Lobby Priorities and Outcomes.....	p. 10
II. EU Projects.....	p. 39
III. Building Alliances.....	p. 47
IV. Nursing Now Europe.....	p. 50
V. A Future for Evidence Base Policymaking.....	p. 55
VI. Data Collection.....	p. 57
VII. EFN Governance.....	p. 59
VIII. Communication.....	p. 62
IX. Conclusion.....	p. 70

Abbreviations

▪ AI	Artificial Intelligence
▪ AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
▪ APN	Advanced Practice Nurse
▪ CPD	Continuous Professional Development
▪ CPME	Standing Committee of European Doctors
▪ DG	Directorate General
▪ DG CONNECT	European Commission Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
▪ DG EMPL	European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
▪ DG GROW	European Commission Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
▪ DG ECHO	European Commission Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
▪ DG SANTE	European Commission Directorate General for Health and Food Safety
▪ DIR36/DIR55 DIR36-55	Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC & 2013/55/EU)
▪ ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
▪ EFN	European Federation of Nurses' Association
▪ EHR	Electronic Health Records
▪ ENRF	European Nursing Research Foundation
▪ EP	European Parliament
▪ EU	European Union
▪ H2020	Horizon 2020 programme (EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation)
▪ InteropEHRate (IEHR)	Interoperable EHRs at user edge (H2020 project)
▪ K4I	Knowledge4Innovation
▪ LLL	Lifelong Learning
▪ LTC	Long-Term Care
▪ MEP(s)	Member(s) of the European Parliament
▪ OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
▪ PGEU	Pharmaceutical Group of European Union
▪ PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
▪ QualMent	Quality Mentorship for Developing Competent Nursing Students

- **Smart4Health (S4H)** Citizen-Centred EU-EHR Exchange for Personalised Health (H2020 project)
 - **SME(s)** Small and Medium Enterprise(s)
 - **SOLP** EFN Strategic & Operational Lobby Plan
 - **Spark** Spark Legal Network (EU law research consultancy)
 - **WHO** World Health Organization
 - **WG** Working group
 - **WP** Work Package
-

Executive Summary

In line with the Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan 2014-2020 (SOLP), the EFN continued, in 2020, to strengthen its core business and lobby activities, building on the achievements of previous years and focussing on its three major key policy areas: Education, Workforce, and Patient Safety and Quality of Care, including digital health.

In this special year for nurses and the nursing profession, and in the context of the significant challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the key achievements for the EFN, in 2020, was to influence the EU Institutions based on the three reports on COVID-19, discussed with several European Commissioners and their cabinets, including Commissioner for Health - Stella Kyriakides, and Commissioner for Employment - Nicolas Schmit, who are embracing the EFN recommendations in their policy developments linked to COVID-19:

- ➔ [EFN Report on “Lessons Learned from Ebola & COVID-19”](#) - which provides a series of lessons learned from the nursing frontline on the best approach to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and recommendations on how to be prepared for a next pandemic.
- ➔ [EFN Report on “COVID-19 impact on nurses’ health & wellbeing - Biological Agent Directive 2020/739”](#) – which includes key recommendations to support the EU health workforce, nurses in particular, to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 without compromising workers’ safety and wellbeing.
- ➔ [EFN report on “COVID-19 crisis management at national level”](#) – which shows that the impact of the pandemic on health service delivery has been significant, with very high nursing infection rates across the EU Member States and incorporates urgent measures to protect our nurses in extremely dangerous working environments with rising levels of infection.
- ➔ [Nurse Lives Matter: COVID-19 deaths and infections among nurses in Europe](#) – which shows estimated numbers of nurses who were infected and died with COVID-19.

Furthermore, the EFN followed up very closely the impact of COVID-19 on **Mental Health** as the wellbeing and mental health of frontline nurses was severely impacted. The EFN took all the opportunities to remind the EU health stakeholders and policy makers of the importance of mental health and of breaking the social stigmas around it, namely through a [joint statement](#) with Gamian-Europe, emphasising that frontline nurses should be protected from some unnecessary stress and mental suffering, some social media on EFN Social Media Network, and by participating in key EU meetings, providing the nurses’ views and expertise on the subject.

Therefore, COVID-19 was for the EFN the overriding priority in 2020, with the EFN being in permanent contact with the EU Institutions since the beginning of the global pandemic, to advocate for its members and represent nurses’ perspectives and expertise to inform concrete actions in order to support and protect nurses on the frontline. Tackling new outbreaks efficiently will require closely coordinated, short and long-term actions to strengthen preparedness and response across all Member States. The importance of qualified and competent nursing personnel is key and intrinsically linked to appropriate, safe and high-quality care for all patients and citizens in all health settings. The EFN believes that, more than ever, it is crucial to apply the [EU Directive 2013/55/EU](#) in relation to the [appropriate content](#) and levels of nursing education (theoretical and clinical) in all the EU countries.

EFN lobby work related to **Education**, our focus was on the developments linked to the Directive 2013/55/EU, namely the European Commission’s **DG GROW study**, undertaken by Spark Legal Consultancy, aiming at assessing whether it would be appropriate, based on the developments in EU countries and their commonalities, to update the minimum training requirements laid down under point 5.2.1 of Annex V of the Directive. The [conclusions of the SPARK Report](#) are in line with EFN position and reflects the changes needed by a profession that has changed and improved its legal base at EU level. Moreover, the EFN continued to follow up on the ongoing debate on mentorship, which is essential to the future sustainability of nurses and the nursing profession, by attending key EU meetings and continuing to develop the Erasmus+ EU project the EFN is a partner in - [QualMent](#) - addressing the lack of clinical mentor’s in nursing education by developing a clinical mentor’s competence with mentor education for national and international nursing students in line with Directive 2013/55/EU and Article 31. It is vital to have nurses that are motivated, capable to deliver good quality care, and engage with the nursing profession.

Workforce was equally important and kept high on EFN political agenda in 2020, with the EFN lobbying the EU institutions on the importance and value of having a comprehensive picture of the nursing workforce and ensuring that the data collected is comparable and usable at EU level. As emphasised by the [European Semester Country Reports](#), almost every EU Member State needs more nurses to support the unmet needs of their population. The EFN Members have been committed to improving the data provided to their EU Semester National Contact Points and make sure it is accurate for the upcoming Country Reports. As in previous years, next to participating in some key EU meetings, the EFN analysed the 2020 European Semester publication, bringing it to the attention of the EFN Members in [a report comparing 2020 with the European Semesters of previous years](#). This report is aiming to support the EFN members with key arguments to empower the nursing profession in all the EU Member States.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has shown that nurses are the cornerstone of any health system, being at the frontline 24/7. With COVID-19, the existing **shortage of nurses** across the EU has increased, with a massive number of nurses leaving the profession (up to 30% in some Member States)¹. Taking as basis the input of the EFN members, the EFN developed an [Policy Statement on “the Consequences of Nurses’ Shortages in Public Health”](#) adopted by the EFN Members in October 2020, aiming to bring to the attention of the EU Institutions the enormous challenge nurses’ shortage is for the nurses, for the nursing profession and for patient safety, and how investing in nurses is an important way to support economic growth.

Focussing on **Patient Safety**, the EFN was very active on the topic on **Vaccination** – through the “**Coalition for Vaccination**”, bringing together European associations of healthcare workers as well as relevant students’ associations in the field – who organised, at the request of DG Sante, an **online campaign** on Vaccination on the occasion of the immunisation week (April 2020, reconducted in October 2020). The campaign, was undertaken collectively and in partnership by the nurses (EFN), the doctors (CPME) and the pharmacists (PGEU), and included the development of 3 sets of [videos](#), and sharing key messages on Social Media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/LinkedIn/YouTube). The EFN [Press release](#) and [Web page](#) strengthened the impact and visibility. EFN contributed to the developments of the coalition, as one of the three co-chairs, to combat misinformation and fake news on vaccination, and to promote the role of healthcare professionals in increasing the update of vaccination among patients and citizens. Working closely with the Commission, the coalition consortium submitted an EU study on ‘Improving **IMMUNISATION** cooperation in the European UNION’ (IMMUNION) within the Commission call on stakeholder activities to support strengthened cooperation against vaccine preventable on Vaccination.

Digitalisation had also a central place in the EFN lobby work in 2020, with a **high-level event** organised at the European Parliament (EP) in February 2020, under the scope of [Nursing Now](#) and [Knowledge4Innovation 11th Summit](#). The event, focussing on ‘European Electronic Health Records’ thematic, provided a state of art on two H2020 projects, [Smart4Health](#) and [InteropEHRate](#), in which the EFN is involved, and brought together more than 150 people (most of them non-nurses-Nursing Now), to exchange views with EU representatives (MEPs, European Commission), civil society and industry/SMEs, on how to co-design the European Electronic Health Records. The EFN published a [report](#) with the key outcomes of the EP event. The EFN’s Executive Committee Members leadership and lobby of key EU stakeholders, European Commission representatives and MEPs on that occasion showed that EFN is a key influential partner in the EU, representing 3 million end-users. As end-user representative, EFN continued to be engaged in two Horizon 2020 funded EU projects developing interoperable systems of Electronic Health Records - [InteropEHRate](#) and [Smart4Health](#), as end-user providing nurses’ input to the several deliverables and disseminating the projects’ developments among health EU stakeholders and the EU Institutions; and to participate in key EU events on digitalisation.

In 2020, the EFN also followed up and positively contributed to a number of other key topics, as: research and innovation; the new EU framework programme – Horizon Europe, to be launched in January 2021; the new health programme 2021-2027 “Health4Europe Programme”; Artificial Intelligence; and Climate (a new key priority within EFN). Next to this, the EFN had been at the forefront to supporting the [Nursing Now campaign](#) in progressing and raising awareness across Europe on the importance of the nursing profession for the sustainability of our healthcare systems. Appointed as the [Nursing Now European regional leader](#), in 2018, the EFN has been promoting the campaign at EU level, and next to the EFN members and partners across Europe who also play an active and positive role in making the Campaign a success.

¹ EFN Tour de Table, EFN GA October 2020

The EFN developed over the year, together with its members, the new EFN Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan (SOLP) for 2021-2027 and continued to develop its Nursing Research Foundation ([ENRF](#)). And last, but not least, the EFN received for the very first time in its history an award – the [2020 Women of Europe Awards](#), in the '*Woman in Action*' category, on behalf of the EU nurses, for their instrumental role and [exceptional commitment](#) to working on the frontline during the COVID-crisis.

The EFN bringing the nurses' expertise and daily reality to the political policy environment, at the highest EU level, led to political impact at all levels. EU policymakers are taking nurses' voice and views more seriously and integrate it into EU hard and soft EU law.

Foreword

Dear EFN Members,
Dear Colleagues,

2020 is an unprecedented year that none of us will ever forget. In respective reflection, we humbly remember with great sadness all our nurses, colleagues, family and friends who lost their lives due to COVID-19, in the course of their selfless commitment to providing lifesaving health care for those in need across Europe. We send our condolences to their families and loved ones. We also recognise that many of our nurses who contracted COVID-19 are facing long-term life changing health challenges. In honour of those we have lost and who are impacted by the long-term effect of COVID-19, we commit to honouring their selfless bravery through continuing to lobby the European Institutions to drive policy change, based on the lessons learnt from nurses on the frontline, to make a real difference to ensuring the profession is supported to deliver safe, appropriate and quality care to all.

For nurses and the nursing profession this year was intended to be a very special, celebrating one, the “Year of the Nurse and Midwife”, as declared by the World Health Organization, marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. For the first time in history, a year was dedicated to the nurses, however, the COVID19 pandemic disrupted everything. All over the world, events and activities were foreseen to celebrate the contribution of the nurses and reflect on the vital work they do every day. But it was through the trauma and tragedy of the global COVID-19 pandemic that the significance of recognising each and every nurse and their exceptional contribution and value to society is absolutely evident to all. While public health policy implemented protective measures such as “lockdown” and despite an obvious lack of resources and funds across many EU countries, nurses with their expert skills proactively engaged in saving lives, comforting with compassion patients and citizens, doing their very best to keep the pandemic under control and to maximise citizens/patient's healthcare outcomes with the knowledge of the high risk of contracting a life-threatening condition. This year, nurses through their commitment, expertise, professionalism, bravery, and heroic actions have saved countless numbers of lives, but have provided compassionate end of life care. Words cannot express the great debt of gratitude that is owed to the frontline nurses relentlessly caring for millions of citizens in unprecedented challenging and hard times. Nurses make a world of difference to people's lives. Their contribution must be recognised and respected by politicians and reflected in their policies.

For many of us, 2020 brought a new way of working, connecting virtually, strengthening advocacy work on social media and through virtual meetings with EU health stakeholders and the EU Institutions, in particular the European Commission DG Employment, DG ECHO, DG SANTE, and DG GROW to coordinate the pan-European response to the pandemic and to maximise the EU-wide institutional support for nurses in times of crisis. In May, the EFN reflected on the lessons learned from COVID-19 building on what nurses experienced in 2014 with Ebola and published a report “Lessons Learned from Ebola & COVID-19”, providing an overview of lessons learnt from both crisis's with the aim to inform the preparation for any future infectious diseases outbreaks.

In October, the EFN collected data on COVID-19 from all our Members on: the COVID-19 impact on nurses' health and wellbeing (Biological Agent Directive 2020/739) and COVID-19 crisis management at national level. These reports were taken forward to lobby the EU Institutions in their policy discussions and co-create EU policies to deal with this crisis from a nursing perspective. It is crucial that future policies on health crisis preparedness reflect the nurses' expertise and views. Frontline nurses are the end-users of any EU policy and are the leaders to translate policy into actual reality. The EFN is determined to continue voicing nurses concerns and demands to support safe and quality health care for all at the highest political levels, to ensure that their voice is heard, their requirements are met, and that the EU policies become fit-for-practice.

We really hope you will be proud of the enormous amount of work we have collectively achieved which is reflected in this EFN Activity Report, providing clear insights into the daily lobby efforts of EFN in 2020, in a very difficult period for all. These achievements would not be possible without your commitment, expertise, collective insights, engagement and positive support.

Looking forward to continuing this collaboration in 2021.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Adams".

Prof Dr Elizabeth Adams
EFN President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul De Raeye".

Prof Dr Paul De Raeye
EFN Secretary General

I. EFN KEY LOBBY PRIORITIES

In line with the [EFN Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan 2014-2020](#) (EFN SOLP), and building on the achievements of previous years, the EFN continued in 2020 focussing on its three major key policy areas: [Education](#) (Under the lead of EFN Professional Committee), [EU Workforce for Health](#) (Under the lead of EFN Workforce Committee), and [Patient Safety and Quality of Care](#) (Under the lead of EFN Public Policy Committee), including [digital health](#). In addition to these 3 major lobby priorities, the EFN proactively focussed on COVID-19 pandemic and the EU Institutions action plans to deal with this pandemic.

One of the key achievements for the EFN in 2020 was the major event organised on 5 February, at the European Parliament, on the [digitalisation of healthcare](#) and the valuable contribution of nurses to the digitalisation process. This event, organised in the context of the Nursing Now Campaign, of which the EFN is the European lead, and the “2020 Year of the Nurse and Midwife”, in honour of the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale’s birth, consisted of a series of panel discussions, followed by a dinner at the European Parliament’s Member Salon, in the presence of the EFN’s Executive Committee Members, key EU stakeholders, European Commission representatives and MEPs. The panel discussions counted on the presence of several high-level speakers, including MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho, MEP Maria Manuel Leitão Marques, MEP Nicolás Gonzalez Casares, MEP Juozas Olekas, Saila Rinne (Head of Sector, DG Connect, European Commission), Thibaut Kleiner (Head of Unit, DG Connect, European Commission), Marc Taverner (CEO, INATBA) and many others. As explained by the EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, “nursing is not only a European but a global force for good”. For more information on this event, see page 17.



Another key achievement for the EFN was the development of 4 reports linked to COVID-19: 1/ the [EFN Report](#) on Lessons Learned from Ebola & COVID-19, based on the EFN existing Report on Ebola (2015); 2/ the [EFN Report](#) on “COVID-19 impact on nurses’ health & wellbeing - Biological Agent Directive 2020-739”, and; 3/ the [EFN Report](#) on COVID-19 crisis management at national level. These reports were discussed with the European Commission and MEPs, that took the recommendations into consideration when developing their EU policies address the many challenges caused by this new pandemic. In December, the EFN drafted a last [report](#) on “Nurse Lives Matter: COVID-19 deaths and infections among nurses in Europe”.

For more information on these reports, see page 19.

Finally, taking into account that the EFN SOLP 2014-2020 was coming to an end (December 2020), the EFN developed a new one for 2021-2027, based on the EFN achievements, adding new lobby topics as Artificial Intelligence and Climate Change. *For more information on the EFN SOLP, see page 35.*

The [EFN SOLP 2014-2020](#) developed and endorsed by EFN Members provided the key priorities and work to be achieved. The following highlights the priorities in 2020 the EFN focussed on:

1. EDUCATION

→ Directive 2013/55/EU, Annexe V

Being a key topic for the nurses and the EFN policy agenda, the EFN continued to follow-up on the latest developments as regards the education for nurses, and in particular the [Directive 2013/55/EU](#), including the European Commission study on the update of Annexe V of the Directive regarding the minimum educational standards for nurses.

Commissioned to the consultancy [SPARK](#) (Spark Legal Network) by the European Commission [DG GROW](#) (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs), the objective of the [study](#) 'Mapping and assessment of developments for one of the sectoral professions under Directive 2005/36/EC – nurse responsible for general care (No 711/PP/GRO/IMA/18/1131/11026)' was to support the European Commission in its assessment of whether to propose an adaptation of the minimum knowledge, skills and training subjects for the profession of nurse responsible for general care under Directive 2005/36/EC, modernised by Directive 2013/55/EU. To meet this objective, data was collected through a literature review, desk research and stakeholder consultation, including EFN Members input. The [conclusions of the SPARK Report](#) have been published, and particular focus is given to the requirements that reflect an adaptation to scientific and technical progress.



In 2020, as in 2019, the EFN actively liaised with SPARK, mainly through EFN Members, who provided input as experts to the Coordinators' meeting with the EU Member States, held in June 2020, to make sure that the Update of the Directive 36/55 Annexe V lives up to the expectancies of EFN and reflects how the nursing profession has evolved in the EU. The EFN took this opportunity to have close contacts with the European Commission representatives, and in particular DG GROW, to ensure that the conclusions and the implementation of SPARK report and the update of Annexe V of Directive 55 is fully fit-for-purpose and reflects the nurses' views, knowing that the [EFN has been working](#) on this topic for many years now, based on the developed EFN Competency Framework.

We can say that for the EFN, SPARK has delivered to the expectations and the report proposed amendments are timely, knowing that the most important section for EFN is section 7.2.3. (page 186 to 190 of the SPARK report), particularly tables 21 and 22. The proposed amendments in the two categories, "scientific progress" and "technical progress", are welcomed by the EFN considering that:

- **The scientific progress category** concludes that the Directive covers what it needs and that only some areas need to be emphasised, namely: 1) Person-centred care theories, 2) Management theories applied to nursing, and 3) Evidence-Based Practice. The EFN believes that some more concrete amendments could be made, such as "Palliative Care", "Patient Safety", "Occupational Health" and "Infection Control".
- **The technical progress category**, proposes some concrete amendments too, which the EFN welcomes mainly as regards two categories examined: 1) e-Health and 2) Healthcare/nursing methods, but believes that some more concrete amendments could be made to this section, such as "Health Sciences" and "Clinical Mentorship".

Finally, the [study](#) suggests that other important knowledge and skills and training subjects appear to have been incorporated by many countries as a result of scientific and technical advancements, while not reaching the majority threshold of Member States support. The study concludes that these might be relevant enough to be taken into account while amending the Directive. The EFN, therefore, encourages the European Commission DG GROW to discuss all the amendments to the Annex V with the EFN Members' National Nurses Associations to make sure these changes are all in line with the nursing profession developments in the EU.

Next to following up on this report, and following up on this debate with the European Commission, the EFN participated in some key EU stakeholders' meetings linked to nursing education, as:

- **EurHeCa workshop with EU stakeholders, in February 2020**, as part of their General Assembly, where DG Grow explained the European Commission's three regimes for recognising professional

qualifications: 1) Automatic recognition based on professional experience; 2) general system of mutual recognition; and 3) automatic recognition based on harmonised minimum training (Directive 2013/55/EU, Annex V, for the nurses). Specific attention was raised on the alert mechanism that the European Commission has put in place, among the EU Member States, to protect patients, and requested that the EU Member States inform the European Commission in case of fake diplomas or other threats to public health are detected.

- **World's Nursing Report webinar, in April 2020**, where it was raised that investing in nursing education will help to achieve the SDGs goals - Nurses can make a maximal contribution – and that one of the report's key findings shows that the average nursing education of 3 years is now getting longer, which is a good signal to strengthen nurses' role in primary care, including prescribing, pandemic preparedness, climate change tackling, etc. Moreover, the report identifies a positive evolution of advance nurse roles across many countries. This balances with the number of physicians available.



→ **Mentorship**

High quality clinical education is paramount to the development of a competent workforce of nurses able to deliver safe patient care. As such the EFN has been following this topic very closely by, namely, participating in an EU project. EFN involvement in the 28 months' EU project, under Erasmus+, called 'Quality mentorship for developing competent nursing students' ([QualMent](#)), which started in September 2018, and is aiming to address the clinical mentor's lack in nursing education and develop the clinical mentor's competence with mentor education for national and international nursing students. This project is key as it links to the Directive 2013/55/EU and Article 31 (8 competencies) and will develop Clinical mentors' competence models which will provide new knowledge and findings regarding the current situation of clinical mentoring in nursing study programmes in the EU. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was frozen from March 2020 until September 2020, when the mentoring education started in Oulu (Finland). Nevertheless, the EFN continued disseminating on the project via social media (@QualMentProject) and eBulletins to EU and national health stakeholders. It is key that after the project finishes, it implements the new cornerstones for clinical mentors to follow across the EU when mentoring nurse students through the clinical placements of its study programmes. Due to the impact of the pandemic, the project, which was due to finish in December 2020, will be prolonged till the end of August 2021. The aim of this delay is to allow sufficient time for the pilot testing of the modules under optimal conditions. *For more information on the project, see page 39.*

Furthermore, the EFN is part of this project not only in the role of disseminating it, but also proving frontline nurse end-user input and making sure that the final clinical mentor's model is fit-for-purpose. It is key to ensure that the future nurses will be motivated, capable of delivering good quality care, and engaged with the nursing profession. As such, one of the key [training materials](#) of the project - Module I "Introduction to mentorship in nursing" - is the EFN's Competency Framework. In the EU, all bachelor nursing programmes must be developed in accordance with the [EU Directive 2013/55/EU](#) (DIR55) and in particular article 31. The EFN Competency Framework, developed in 2015, is a guide for the national governments and education facilities to develop their curricula in compliance with DIR55. The Directive criteria refers to half of all direct patient contact hours of each study programme (2300 hours) are done in the clinical environment, under the surveillance of clinical mentors. However, clinical mentor's education and capacity building is lacking an EU wide approach. Because quality mentorship has a significant impact on the future nursing student's careers, it is a key EFN supports through CPD the capacity in mentorship.

Taking this further, the EFN Members discussed at the EFN General Assembly, October 2020, the importance to ensure that those future nurses will be motivated, capable of delivering good quality care, and engaged with the nursing profession. In this context, the role of the nursing mentor acquires a very important relevance as they will be in charge of transmitting all the nursing knowledge to the nursing newcomers taking into account the latest

developments made in the fields of health and nursing and Directive 2013/55/EU. The EFN Members discussed the new EFN Policy Statement on Nurses' Mentorship and agreed that the EFN position should be strengthened, although this statement is coming at a timely moment, due to the importance of nurses' mentorship right now. The amended Policy Statement will be again discussed and approved at the EFN General Assembly in April 2021.

The EFN will continue working on these education key points for the nursing profession, in 2021.

2. EU WORKFORCE FOR HEALTH

→ European Semester & Country Reports

Introduced in 2010, this is an important annual process undertaken by the European Commission which provides a framework for the coordination of national policies across the European Union. The process allows EU countries to discuss their plans and monitor progress at specific times throughout the year. The first phase of the European Semester starts in February of each year, when the European Commission publishes the [Country Reports](#) - a detailed analysis of EU Member States' plans of budgetary, macroeconomic, and structural reforms. Based on these reports, the European Commission proposes a set of recommendations to the EU Member States to help countries to prioritise the actions they need to take to achieve the EU's long-term strategy for jobs and growth.

As in previous years, the EFN having the European Semester high in its political agenda, [analysed closely the European Semester 2020 publication](#), bringing it to the attention of the EFN Members as a [report analysing 2020](#) in comparison with previous European Semesters & Country Reports 2016-2019 and selecting the relevant information for nurses, nursing and healthcare. The aim of this EFN Report is to be a compilation of all the [European Commission's Country Reports](#) entries related to nursing and/or healthcare, for each EU Member State, providing a unique insight in the capacity of the EU healthcare systems. Measures taken by one country that were successful are likely to inform initiatives for improving the healthcare situation in another country. Of course, this latter point should be understood only partially, considering that differences across healthcare systems exist. It has become more evident than ever before that there is a need to have strong healthcare systems across the EU that can effectively meet the demands of a changing demographic and sudden occurring pandemics. It goes without saying, most EU healthcare systems were already under heavy pressure before the coronavirus outbreak hit the EU very hard. The situation has only worsened some already existing structural weaknesses as outlined in the different Country Reports of the European Semester. For the EFN, of particular importance are Prevention, Primary care, Hospital/Inpatient Care, Long-term care, Workforce, which have been analysed in the EFN Report developed. But the most important is that the European Commission takes the Country Reports to advance the dissemination and adoption of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) across all EU Member States. If implemented, this piece of "soft legislation" has the power to reduce social inequalities among EU citizens and to advance universal health coverage for all. In doing so, it can advance the profile of the nursing profession across all EU countries.



→ Nursing Shortage

COVID-19 has shown to the world that nurses are the cornerstone of any health system, being at the frontline of patient care, 24/7 at the bedside with the patient, being the most trusted healthcare professional group. They have shown how motivated nurses are, and that in times of crisis, nurses are often the last contact that a patient has. But even though they are the largest healthcare professional group, about 3 million in the EU, and 6 million in Europe, huge shortages of nurses remain across the EU and Europe with disastrous consequences for the quality, safety and continuity of care to citizens/patients. The EFN has been working on this point for several years now, with some positive outcomes, but it is today, more than ever, increasingly necessary to raise the shortage of nurses again to the highest political attention in the EU institutions, the healthcare stakeholders, and more important, the national governments.

In 2020, the year of the nurses, the EFN and its Members looked at this challenge from the impact that nurses' shortages have on the health of the people of the EU and Europe. With COVID-19, this shortage of nurses has increased, more than ever, with nurses getting sick and others leaving the profession (up till 30% in some EU Member States). The lack of appropriate resources and investments, and without a sufficient number of highly qualified and competent nursing workforce, vulnerable populations such as our older citizens or those with underlying health conditions have tragically suffered the worst burden and effect of this COVID-19 virus. In the context we are living in today, in which the population is ageing and the number of people living with chronic diseases is increasing steadily, it has become more important than ever to make sure the nursing workforce is sufficiently staffed. Investing in nurses and the nursing profession saves lives. As such, the EFN Members discussed and endorsed, at the EFN October 2020 General Assembly, an [EFN Policy Statement on "the Consequences of Nurses' Shortages in Public Health"](#) believing that more argumentation on how 'safe nursing staffing' has a direct influence on 'patient safety' and 'lower mortality rates', and that investing in nurses is a way to support economic growth. Furthermore, due to the COVID-19 situation and its evolution it is crucial to advocate for patient-nurse ratios (staffing levels). The EFN Policy Statement is calling on the EU institutions to ensure scientific methods to determine sufficient and safe staffing levels; protect and promote entry into the nursing profession and the working conditions of nurses; ensure the right and full transposition across all EU countries of Directive 1999/70/EC; recognise the importance of the nursing profession for patients and citizens.

The EFN will continue following up on these workforce challenges in 2021.

3. PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY OF CARE

➔ Vaccination

Vaccination features high on the agenda of the European Institutions as well as at the level of individual countries and healthcare authorities. Knowing that vaccination is the main tool for primary prevention of diseases and one of the most cost-effective public health measures available, currently preventing between 2 and 3 million deaths in the world every year, and that immunisation through vaccination is the best defence we have against serious, preventable, and sometimes deadly, contagious diseases, the [European Commission is reinforcing](#) its support to national vaccination efforts to increase coverage, amongst others, namely through:

- ➔ A new [European Vaccination Information Portal](#) (EVIP), developed by ECDC in collaboration with EMA and the European Commission, that provides evidence-based information on vaccines and vaccination.
- ➔ The [European Joint Action on Vaccination](#) co-funded by the EU Health Programme (a project that started in September 2018 and will run until 2021) – aiming to deliver and share concrete tools for stronger national responses to vaccination challenges such as vaccine hesitancy; and,
- ➔ The "Coalition for Vaccination", convened in spring 2019, that brings together European associations of healthcare workers as well as relevant students' associations in the field, of which the [EFN](#) is one of the co-chairs, next to [CPME](#) (Doctors) and [PGEU](#) (Pharmacists). The Coalition is aiming to delivering accurate information to the public, combating myths around vaccines and vaccination, and to exchange best practices on vaccination.



As the largest professional group of the healthcare professions, nurses are the frontline staff largely responsible for delivering safe and effective vaccination programmes to communities across Europe, yet rarely getting formal recognition for this life-saving endeavour. Next to this, nurses have the additional role to educating the public, identifying vulnerable groups, raising awareness, and promoting uptake among those who stand to benefit. Nurses' contribution to frontline impact is crucial on this, and the EFN Members [best practices](#) cannot be

ignored. As such, as co-chair of the Coalition for Vaccination, and at the request of the European Commission DG Santé, the EFN participated in a [social media campaign](#) promoting vaccination, in cooperation with CPME and PGEU.

The campaign, done in parallel by the 3 Co-chairs on their respective social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube), consisted of sharing a series of videos developed covering several scenarios for each of our professions (EFN = Nurses; CPME = Doctors; PGEU = Physicians). For the nurses these 3 videos related to: the “nurses promoting vaccination among citizens” (in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#)), the “nurses promoting vaccination to nurses” (in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#)), and finally the “nurses promoting vaccination among medical doctors” (in [EN](#), [FR](#), [DE](#)).



These videos, together with some key messages were published during the European Immunisation Week, from 20 to 26 April 2020, on [EFN Website](#) dedicated [page](#), on [EFN YouTube dedicated channel](#) created for the campaign, and on [EFN Social Media](#) (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & LinkedIn - @EFNBrussels) – key #hashtags: #CoalitionForVaccination #nurses #VaccinesWork @EU_Commission @EU_Health #vaccination #EUvaccines #EIW2020 @WHO #NursingNow2020 #Supportnursesandmidwives #protectedtogether #Nurses2020 #VaccinesWorkforAll. The EFN took this opportunity to send out a [Press Release](#) on the launch of the campaign to all its network. At the request of the European Commission DG Santé, the campaign was reinstalled from 5 to 9 October 2020, to make it coincide with [WHO Europe's Flu Awareness Campaign](#) and the European Commission [communication](#) at that moment on the importance of vaccination.





Over the year, and as co-chair, the EFN participated in all the regular **meetings of the Coalition for Vaccination**, held internally (between the 3 co-chairs), as well as the ones with the other members of the Coalition and the European Commission (as on 9 March, and on 4 September 2020), where key points were discussed, as the coalition work, the vaccination media campaign, the coalition governance and membership, the members' activities on vaccination, future commitments of the Coalition, EU project proposal, etc.



Next to those meetings, the EFN participated in some others dealing with the topic, as: **YC4PV Manifesto launch, at the European Parliament, in January 2020**, to reflect on how vaccination hesitancy impacts the vaccination rates and what should be done to increase vaccination coverage rates in the EU and protect European citizens; **Official launch MEPs Interest Group 'Patients' Rights and Cross-Border Healthcare' – Vaccination, in January**, to discuss vaccination and vaccination hesitancy, and increase uptake in the EU; **FIPRA - Community Peer Network Initiative Workshop, in July 2020**, to discuss the role played by local communities in helping to build levels of



vaccination confidence; **Webinar on EU Vaccine Strategy, in September 2020**, organised by the Health Policy Platform, with keynote speech from Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, aiming to inform the health stakeholders on the general Commission strategy on vaccination for COVID-19 and on the initiatives taken over the last weeks to secure a supply of safe and efficacious future vaccines; **EFN Meeting with Commissioner Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety**, in October 2020, in which she welcomed and thanked the EFN's role as co-chair of the European Campaign for Vaccination, and encouraged the EFN to continue advocating for vaccination and for combating vaccination hesitancy.



Finally, the EFN became a partner (together with other members of the Coalition for Vaccination group) in the EU project 'IMMUNION' ("Improving IMMunisation cooperation in the European UNION"), under the European Commission call "[Stakeholder activities to support strengthened cooperation against vaccine preventable diseases](#)" (Call ID: PJ-08-2020). Building on learnings from vaccination efforts at national, regional and global level, this 24 months EU project, starting in 2021, is aiming at adding value to existing EU and national initiatives, particularly the Coalition for Vaccination, by increasing stakeholder collaboration to address issues of access to accurate information about vaccination in order to increase confidence in and uptake of vaccines. This will primarily be achieved through strategies focused on communication and training.

→ Digitalisation

There is increasing interest across the EU institutions, the national governments, the healthcare industries and the EU stakeholders to digitalise the healthcare ecosystem, mainly aiming at deploying more cost-effective healthcare provisions, reducing the frontline nursing workload, easing lifelong learning activities for healthcare professionals, facilitating cross-border healthcare, and fully developing EU Electronic Healthcare Records (EHR). As such, the EFN has been following this topic very closely over the last few years, providing nurses' input and expertise to the debate when possible and needed.

In the context of patient safety and healthcare digitalisation, the EFN continues to be very engaged in two Horizon 2020 funded EU projects developing interoperable systems of Electronic Health Records -

[InteropEHRate](#) and [Smart4Health](#). The underlying idea behind these

two projects is to empower the EU citizens by developing apps/cloud that would contain their Electronic Health Records (EHR), making their health data available at their fingertips. Citizens could then use this possibility to travel around Europe and exchange their health data with nurses and other healthcare professionals during their health consultations/emergencies abroad. The EFN has been very active in those projects by providing nurses (as end-user) input to the several deliverables and disseminating the projects' developments among health EU stakeholders and the EU Institutions. *For more information on these projects, see page 41.*



In this special year for the nurses and the nursing profession, the “[Year of the Nurse and Midwife](#)” in honour of the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale's birth, and focussing at EU level on Research & Innovation, particularly on the digitalisation of the healthcare sector, **the EFN organised on 5 February 2020 a high-level meeting at the European Parliament on digitalisation**. The event, with two sessions - one in the afternoon, and a dinner-debate in the evening, was aiming to celebrate the hard work of nurses globally, under the scope of [Nursing Now](#) and [Knowledge4Innovation 11th Summit](#), with a special focus on the European Electronic Health Records, providing a state of art on two H2020 projects, [Smart4Health](#) and

[InteropEHRate](#) developing formats for European Electronic Health Records in co-creation with the EFN, representing 3 million EU frontline nurses and end-users.

This [meeting](#), bringing more than 150 people together (most of them non-nurses people), was an opportunity to **exchange views with MEPs, the European Commission, civil society representatives and industry/SMEs**, on the policies and steps to be undertaken to co-design the European Electronic Health Records, knowing that

having a European Electronic Health Records' exchange format is a growing priority of the EU Institutions, as

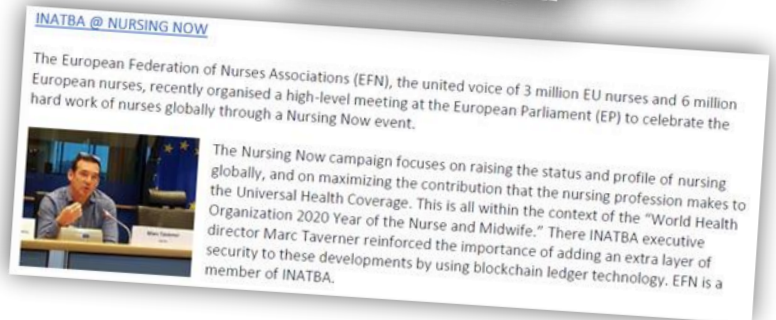
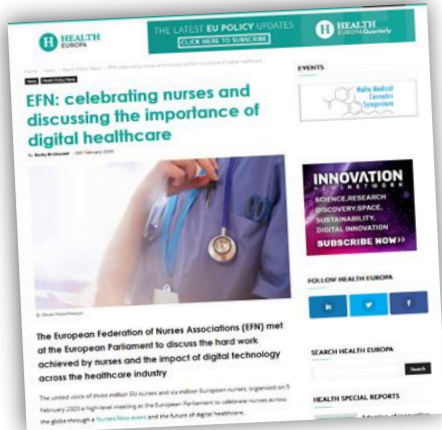
pointed out in the Council Conclusions on Health in the Digital Society - making progress in data-driven innovation in the field of health (2017/C440/05) and the European Commission Recommendation on a European Electronic Health Record exchange format (C(2019)800).

The **afternoon session** was a good occasion to present the audience what the Nursing Now campaign is doing (of which the EFN is the European Lead), and to debate the health challenges we are currently facing, namely in terms of innovation. The **dinner-debate** allowed MEPs, Commission Representatives, Industry/SMEs and Civil Society to continue debating on co-creation, digitalization, and healthcare innovation. It became clear how successful nurses are in developing evidence-based EU policies, benefiting the people within the EU and Europe.

A detailed report with the main conclusions of the event is available [here](#).



The information on this event was relayed on [EFN Website \(Homepage – News section\)](#), [EFN Social Media](#) (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/LinkedIn – @EFNBrussels) – key words: @EFNBrussels #nurses #NursingNow2020 #Digitalisation #health #endusers, through a [Press Release sent out by email to all EFN network](#). The meeting participants and keynote speakers also shared the information through their own media channels (See below some examples).



INATBA NEWSLETTER - March 2020

Health Europa Magazine - February 2020 (See article [here](#))

Some Social Media examples



Next to this event, the EFN participated, in 2020, in some key meetings on Digitalisation at EU level, as: **EU Health Policy Platform Thematic Network Webinar** on “Preparing health care professionals to the ongoing digitalisation of care: Innovation readiness, digital leadership and literacy”, in May 2020, to discuss about case studies and best practices to improve organisational and workforce digital readiness, and obtain insights for a Joint Statement; **EU40 Digital Webinar** on “Artificial Intelligence and Data Science – Aiding the fight against Coronavirus?”, in June 2020, to discuss how different stakeholders can help to fight against COVID-19 through the use of Artificial Intelligence and data science, and how AI and data science can be part of the solution to fight present and future pandemics?; **Blockchain4Europe Webinar** on “COVID-19 tracing via Blockchain - Striking a balance between privacy and public health?”, in June 2020, to reflect on the opportunities offered by Blockchain technology in tackling the pandemic and addressing the concerns with digital contact tracing; **EFN meeting with Commissioner’s Vestager Cabinet (in charge of digitalisation)**, in July 2020, where the digitalisation in the frontline nursing profession and the implementation of Electronic Health Records at the EU level was discussed. In the digitalisation of healthcare, the perspective of the end-user is essential to ensure new tool’s deployment and scalability; **Virtual High-Level Conference on Digital Health 2020 – EU on the Move**, in November 2020, where the participants could exchange on how best to attain a common European Health Data Space (EHDS); were informed on current and future applications of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence in the healthcare sector and discussed both potential and possible risks, with the aim to identify the added value that the EU and Europe, as a common economic, legal and value-based community, have to offer in the field of Big Data and AI for science-driven, value-based and patient-centred healthcare.

The EU Institutions, national governments, healthcare industries and stakeholders are all interesting in digitalising the healthcare ecosystem, mainly aiming at deploying more cost-effective healthcare provisions, reducing the frontline nursing workload, easing lifelong learning activities for healthcare professionals, facilitating cross-border care, and fully developing EU Electronic Healthcare Records (EHR). To develop sustainable healthcare ecosystems, co-creation and co-design with the end-user becomes essential. But, due to the current lack of end-user co-creation, there is a lot of patchwork, too many digital health apps and tools, leading to a kind of ‘blockage’ for the end-user. Nurses need to be included in this co-creation and co-design as end-users. As such, the EFN will continue in 2021 to follow this point very closely and to provide the nurses’ views and expertise as end-user.

The EFN will continue following up on these Patient Safety & Quality of Care key points in 2021.

4. **OTHER KEY POLITICAL TOPICS EFN LOBBIED ON**

a. **COVID-19**

The significant toll COVID-19 has taken on the citizens of Europe, in terms of lives lost, human suffering as well as the impact this has had on people’s daily lives is unprecedented. All over Europe, and the world, [nurses](#), as frontline, have been working exceptionally hard to contain the pandemic and protect people, doing their job in challenging work environments, lacking enough and/or proper protective equipment, putting themselves at risk to protect the communities and often getting infected by the virus themselves, with deadly consequences in some cases. In this context of COVID-19 outbreak, [nurses as always](#) are at the frontline with patients who need them, doing their utmost to provide high quality and safe care. In recognition of the invaluable contribution and expertise of the nursing profession, the EFN focussed on this crucial topic the beginning of the outbreak in Europe, calling on all the EU Institutions and health stakeholders for greater involvement of nurses in the co-design of healthcare policies to ensure they respond to the individuals and societies health needs and [support nurses](#) in further supporting and empowering patients.



» **EFN Reports on COVID-19**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe, the **EFN has been a strong advocate** towards the EU Institutions, and in particular the European Commission DG EMPL, DG Santé, DG CONNECT, and DG ECHO,

meeting on regular basis with high-level European Commission officers to discuss on the needs and the role of the nursing workforce in such crisis, and the need to empower it, making sure that our nurses were equipped with the right material and were receiving adequate and appropriate training. This pandemic showed that once again, as with Ebola in 2014, we were not prepared for such crisis.

1. Lessons Learned from Ebola & COVID-19



Due to the need of taking urgent action in this debate and policy decisions at EU level, and at the request of the European Commission, the EFN picked up a previously published [EFN report on lessons learned during the Ebola crisis](#), that was showing that we were not prepared unless we were all prepared to deal with such pandemic, and looked at it from a COVID-19 perspective. This exercise led to a new [EFN Report on Lessons Learned from Ebola and COVID-19](#), published in June 2020, which demonstrates that once again the reality of the concerns EFN raised in 2015, from experience of the Ebola pandemic, was still the valid: **'WE WERE NOT PREPARED!'**

The COVID-19 pandemic has been taking a devastating toll on the EU citizens and the healthcare systems of the European Union, in addition to having a significant negative impact on the health and wellbeing of frontline nurses, delivering expert health care in poor and dangerous working conditions, with not enough human resources and appropriate and safe protective equipment.

Therefore, and similarly to the EFN call during the Ebola crisis, again the EFN urged the EU institutions, EU national governments, health industry and other health stakeholders, to develop health and workforce policies based on the lessons learned from Ebola and COVID-19, highlighting in the report some key recommendations, as: Provide nurses the material they need to do their frontline nursing case; Invest in nursing care; Combat frontline stigmatisation; Collect data – proactively monitor and report on the number of nurses that are infected with COVID-19 and those who died from it; Work with the nurses and foster co-creation & co-design with frontline nurses to make sure EU policies are fit-for-purpose.

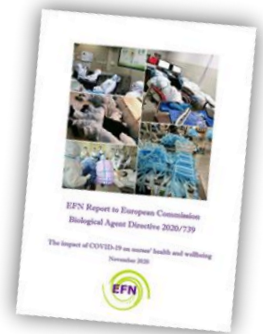
This report was sent to all the EFN Members to be used as a tool at national level, and to all the key EU policy makers, EU Commission and MEPs, who shown a high interest in it, and who are willing to co-create new policies and measures that support the nursing frontline, taking into account this EFN report and the nurses' expertise. The EFN had several meetings with high-level European Commission, namely from DG Sante, DG GROW and DG ECHO, to discuss the outcomes of this Report and the recommendations provided and see how to take this to the next stage, taking EFN/nurses' recommendations into account in their policy developments.

2. EFN report on "COVID-19 impact on nurses' health & wellbeing - Biological Agent Directive 2020/739"

During such times of health crisis, it is vitally important to strengthen healthcare systems by extending support to those frontline nurses who are placing their own lives at risk, and those of their families, while providing care to others. Supporting healthcare professionals is a common priority across the EU but actions have so far been local, ad hoc and disjointed. With this in mind, the EFN Executive Committee commissioned in September 2020, an EU-wide survey among 36 National Nurses Associations, Members of EFN, **to collect data related to COVID-19 and its impact on nurses across Europe**, and in particular with a view to uncovering local insight on whether COVID-19 is being legally recognised as an occupational injury, if there is a non-legal occupational health scheme that provides this recognition, and if governments or employers provide compensation to the healthcare professionals exposed to or infected by COVID-19 in the workplace.

The outcomes of the survey show that exposure to COVID-19 is legally recognised as an occupational injury in the EFN Members' countries, and that there is some availability of government compensation to healthcare workers exposed to or infected by COVID-19 in the workplace; though this is not universal, with some EFN Members noting that such compensation is lacking. In some countries governments and employers offer supplements to frontline workers in recognition of the risk they accept, to themselves and their family members, while providing care to patients with COVID-19. However, there are stark differences across countries and across public and private providers.

The [EFN Report on “COVID-19 impact on nurses’ health & wellbeing - Biological Agent Directive 2020/739”](#) provides some key recommendations as: Develop a consistent approach across the EU with regard the identification of exposure to COVID-19 as an occupational injury; Develop a consistent approach to compensation across EU Member States, in recognition of the risk nurses are exposed to when delivering care during the pandemic; Consider a consistent approach to compensation for healthcare workers employed in the private sector, ensuring parity across private providers and settings. It is crucial to support the EU health workforce, nurses in particular, to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 without compromising workers’ safety and wellbeing; and to continue to encourage investment in preparedness, learning from the lessons and knowledge gained so far, and enhancing monitoring and follow up initiatives.



This report was sent to key EU policymakers, the EU Commission and MEPs, who shown a high interest in its key conclusions and recommendations, taking it to a next level at political level. On 27 November the EFN Executive Committee met the European Commissioner for Employment, Commissioner Schmit, taking further the recommendations, transferred into concrete political legislative initiatives.

3. EFN report on COVID-19 crisis management at national level

In the same line as for the previous report, and conscious of the huge difficulties of the healthcare professions in this times of COVID-19, the EFN Members where requested, at the October 2020 EFN General Assembly, to provide information on the COVID-19 crisis management at national level. The useful information collected and compiled in the [EFN report on “COVID-19 crisis management at national level”](#) is a key lobby tool towards the European Institutions making sure frontline nurses will be better prepared, protected and supported for the next outbreak or health crisis in the EU.



The outcomes of the survey show that the impact of the pandemic on health service delivery has been significant, with hospitalisations relating to COVID-19 remaining high across countries with negative consequences for the work and workload of frontline nurses. Alarming, EFN Members report inconsistency and uncertainty with regard to steady provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as COVID-19 testing for nurses, irrespective of setting; nurses employed

in care homes are especially concerned. Current capacity of healthcare systems to respond to the pandemic appears to hinge on nurses’ flexibility to go above and beyond; to work in excess of their normal working hours and in settings outside their areas of expertise. Not surprisingly, the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on nurses is substantial, with many EFN Members already concerned about increasing levels of burnout among nurses. In addition to the physical and psychological impact, nurses in some countries have experienced negative social consequences including violence and stigmatisation. Disappointingly, nurses report that psychological and social support for those affected by the pandemic is not readily available on a national level in all countries; rather, in most countries, it appears to depend on voluntary or private initiatives, and to vary depending on health setting and employer.

The EFN Report provides some key recommendations: Ensure accurate and continuous recording of cases of nurses infected with and died from COVID-19; Make data on the impact of COVID-19 on nurses and nursing available to help plan accurate response to the pandemic; Acknowledge the significant negative impact and risk of COVID-19 to nurses and nursing; and offer support to manage the damage and contain the risk: Ensure adequate supply of protective and care equipment for healthcare workers and nurses in particular irrespective of their work setting (public or private, in community or acute care settings); Provide freely and easily accessible testing for nurses, regardless of symptoms or exposure to the COVID-19 virus; Increase capacity in the health system to respond to and address care needs that have been displaced due to the pandemic, such as cancer screening and treatments; Engage with nurses and their representatives at national and European level to plan the provision of adequate support for nurses, especially those whose health has been negatively affected by COVID-19; Plan and initiate measures to protect health systems across Europe from the imminent worsening of the nurse shortage, by focussing nurse staffing and wellbeing; Overcome the variability and inconsistency nurses across Europe

experience with regard to pandemic planning and response; work towards a coordinated approach across health settings and countries.

This EFN Report was handed over to key EU policy makers, the EU Commission and MEPs, who again shown a high interest in its key conclusions and recommendations, taking the EFN recommendations into account in their policy process and developments. The 3 EFN Reports on COVID-19 were used by the European Commission as key tools to feed their pipeline action plans linked to the pandemic, especially the COVID-19 [health response package](#) published by the European Commission DG Santé, in November 2020.

The [EFN Executive Committee Members met Commissioner Schmit](#), from DG Jobs and Social Rights, in November 2020, and discussed the COVID-19 challenges, providing the Commissioner concrete recommendations.

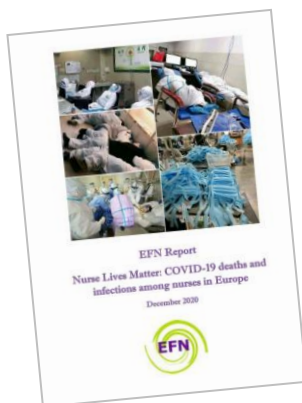


The dialogue with Commissioner Schmit is just a start in a series of concrete recommendations/solution to specific challenges the nursing profession is facing in the EU, extracted from the EFN's Report on Lessons Learned from Ebola and COVID-19 (June 2020) and the EFN member data collected in the EFN General Assembly Tour de Table (October 2020). Both the Commission and EFN explored possible areas of cooperation between DG EMPL and EFN. Among the possible topics addressed are:

- Collaborating with the [OSHA](#) (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work) to enhance and improve data collection quantifying the number of cases that were infected during the COVID-19 pandemic (whether by just getting sick, or by passing away from COVID-19). DG EMPL/OSHA are currently working with the Member States on those numbers, cross-checking what they receive (reliability and validity of data). Furthermore, the long-term effects of COVID-19 on nurses need to be measured. The more fatigued nurses are, the most likely they are to be exposed to dangerous hazards at the workplace. It is essential to decrease unnecessary exposure to dangerous biological agents at work. Many nurses left the profession already, more considering leaving the profession due to burn out and constant exposure to risks. Monitoring COVID-19 as "occupational injuries" is the responsibility of the EU Agency OSHA. Unless these occupational injuries are tracked, it would be even more difficult to attract more newcomers to the nursing profession. Monitoring the transposition of the Biological Agents Directive, to be implemented by 24 November 2021 will be key for 2021.
- Address the nurses' shortages around Europe - and stress the importance of linking shortage to the topic of recruitment & retention of nurses. This could lead to piloting and upscaling best practices from EFN members in a Horizon Europe submission. The EFN October GA Tour de Table gave the Commissioner a clear view on what is happening frontline in all EU Member States: poor working conditions and low wages make nurses leave the nursing professions (up till 30% in some Member States), hence deepening the shortages. It is key to improve the working conditions of nurses and in doing so, make the profession more attractive for newcomers and improve staff retention. The [European Pillar for Social Rights](#) is a useful tool for developing mechanisms to support nurses staying in the profession.

- The [Pact for Skills](#) commitment will be key to explore in 2021, together with DG GROW, Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton, responsible for the PQD. Upscaling skills, LLL/CPD is key for EFN with specific focus on the coordination of Long-Term Care. Skills empowerment is key for nurses, especially linked to the Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) in long-term care. Strengthen community care & long-term care (mainly privatized in EU - for profit) is needed by developing a competent, well-motivated and highly educated nursing workforce to deliver the increasingly diverse services needed to address an ageing population and long-term care within and across Member States. Therefore, we need national/EU legislation based on patient dependency and level of care to ensure appropriate nurse/patient ratios in health services for people in need of long-term care. Investing in advanced roles for nurses, with special regard to the APN and nurse prescribers, will positively increase access to healthcare services for EU citizens. An advanced role with the appropriate skills-mix, will future proof the design of an effective, responsive, dynamic and sustainable frontline workforce composition, as set out in the EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1.

4. Nurse Lives Matter: COVID-19 deaths and infections among nurses in Europe



Across the world it is estimated that more nurses have died during the COVID-19 pandemic than during the first World War. Throughout the pandemic, the EFN continued to gather intelligence about the impact of COVID-19 on nurses, stepping in where others have stepped out. The [current interim report](#) examines input from 27 National Nurses Associations across Europe (with data collected in December 2020), representing 77% of the EFN membership. Through identifying official and estimated numbers of nurses who were infected and died with COVID-19, the EFN presents this document as a resource for healthcare stakeholders, policy makers, clinicians, patients and the public to invite discussion, policy response and exchange of practice to strengthen ongoing resilience in the nursing workforce across Europe during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collected show that there has been a collective failure by European governments to protect nurses, with a conservative estimate of over 125,000 being infected with COVID-19; and over 150 succumbing to the virus. More alarmingly still is that many

European governments fail to accurately collect and report the numbers of nurses infected and died with COVID-19, significantly hindering Europe's ability to plan an evidence-informed response to protect nurses moving forward.

To protect nurses, and in so doing safeguard the future of healthcare in Europe, it is vital the European Commission, the national governments, and other European stakeholders take coordinated and immediate supportive action in collaboration with nurses themselves and their representative organisations. In the years to come, as Europe moves from a responsive to a recovery phase, a key challenge for the European Institutions will be how to best incorporate in the design of pandemic recovery planning the experience and expertise of frontline nurses.

» Joint Statement

Next to these key steps, the EFN took some political actions in March 2020 by signing a [joint statement with twelve European organisations of Health Professionals](#) on COVID-19 and the lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The European healthcare professional organisations were calling on the European Commission to open a permanent line of communication with European health professionals to share experience and best practice across Europe and to ensure that the Commission's own support measures focus on operational priorities on the ground.

» Monitoring EU developments

From the beginning of the outbreak in Europe, the EFN monitored closely how the EU institutions were responding to COVID-19 pandemic, and especially the European Commission, with whom the EFN has been working very closely since the beginning of the pandemic. As regards the European Commission, they have been coordinating a common European response to the coronavirus outbreak, aiming to take action and reinforce Europe's public health sectors while mitigating the socio-economic impact of this huge health crisis, together with the EU Member States to make sure the national responses are aligned. From the European Parliament point of view, they have been strongly advocating worldwide for the role of the EU as a leader in this pandemic management by highlighting what all the EU institutions have been doing to ensure economic recovery and improving the public health situation,

while the European Council, has been serving as a forum for the EU Member States to coordinate this crisis, with the approval of a recovery plan for Europe. The EFN monitored closely the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, playing the biggest role during the pandemic, on its daily reporting on the situation of COVID-19 across all EU countries and the UK. Their interactive dashboard tracking the number of COVID-19 cases in the EU and worldwide has been very helpful to understand the evolution of the pandemic, and put the pressure on the EU Institutions to take stronger & more accurate actions.

» **Meetings linked to COVID-19 debate**

Over the year, the EFN followed closely the several meetings on COVID-19 organised at EU level, bringing some key insight and information for EFN lobby work, as:

- **International Council of Nurses COVID-19 Webinar**, in March 2020, where the situation of the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe was analysed.
- **13h Annual Lectures meeting on COVID-19**, in March 2020, to discuss on the empowerment of the citizens against COVID-19 crisis - seen as a systemic crisis at all levels: health care crisis, sanitary crisis and economic crisis.
- **EAFIP webinar** on “Opportunities to tackle the COVID-19 Crisis through innovation procurement”, in April 2020, aiming to provide a view on the different actions undertaken by the European Commission and guidance on innovation procurements of ICT based solutions to tackle COVID-19.
- **WHO Webinar** on Nurses and midwives in the COVID-19 response, in April 2020, to examine the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak worldwide.
- **Science-Business Webinar** on “COVID-19 and Horizon: What is to be done?”, in April 2020, to discuss about role of research, policy and the fund spent in emergency research under Horizon 2020 to help to find vaccines.
- **IFIC Webinar** on “Care during beyond the COVID-19 Crisis: Building integrated care as the corner stone of our new reality”, in April 2020, to discuss on building integrated care as the corner stone of our new reality and to share some stories and experiences from those working in the health and care sectors.
- **Webinar** on “Co-operation in action: the EU single market as the avenue to recovery”, in April 2020, to discuss about how the EU can make the most of the tools that the Single Market affords, strengthen and improve an EU response against Covid-19.
- **Science-Business Webinar “Better prepared: Strengthening health systems for a post-COVID world”, in April 2020**, to discuss about how to redefine ‘preparedness’ for the health systems and how to rethink health skills, training, education during this COVID crisis.
- **POLITICO’s Virtual Panel Event on “Managing chronic diseases in the time of coronavirus”, in May 2020**, to which the EFN Secretary General was invited to as a speaker. The event brought together policy makers, medical professionals, patients and health thought leaders to discuss how to prepare health systems to avoid a vicious circle for chronic patients during and in the aftermath of the coronavirus crisis.
- **K4I Webinar** on “The role of R&I in the Recovery Plan- How does the Corona experience affect the EU’s innovation policy?”, in June 2020, where it was discussed the need to rebuild the European economy in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the Recovery Plan and the revised MFF must not lose sight of the centrality of R&I in building the EU’s Resilience.
- **Blockchain4Europe Webinar** on “COVID-19 tracing via Blockchain – Striking a balance between privacy and public health?”, in June 2020, to reflect on the opportunities offered by Blockchain technology in tackling the pandemic and addressing the concerns with digital contact tracing.
- **ESN Webinar: COVID-19 and Long-Term Care - Challenges, Responses and Future Planning**, in July 2020, where participants discussed the experiences and challenges that social care services faced during



the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking into the future, participants looked into what is needed to better prepare for future long-term crisis (particularly within COVID-19).

- **European Parliament Plenary debate on the “Impact of Covid-19 outbreak on long-term care facilities”**, in October 2020, where the MEPs debated on the impact of Covid-19 outbreak on long-term care facilities with Dubravka Suica, European Commission Vice-President.



» Social Media

We know how social media can influence the policy process and outcomes. In these times of crisis, the EFN took all the opportunities to raise awareness on the nurses' situation towards this COVID-19 pandemic. And using [EFN Social Media](#) (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) was one of the means to reach the EU decision makers. Key words/Hashtags: #covid19 #nurses #Preparedness #TogetherWeCan #nurses #nurses2020 #UnitedAgainstCoronavirus #supportnursesandmidwives #nursingnow2020 @EU_Commission @EU_Health @EFNBrussels



» Nursing Special Edition - H14 - Health Europa Quarterly Magazine

In the context of lockdown and COVID-19 crisis all over Europe, the EFN Secretary General published in the Health Europa Quarterly Magazine several articles in [issue 14](#) launched in August 2020. These [EFN articles](#) highlight the need for international collaboration in the fight against the virus; and look at technology and innovation in the health and care sectors, in particular blockchain.

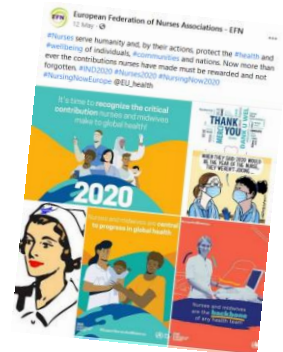
» International Nurses Day 2020 - Recognising nurses' hard work in this 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale birth!

Every year on 12 May, the nurses are celebrated around the world. On the International Nurses Day, it is not only the nurse and the birth of Florence Nightingale, with this year marking the 200th anniversary, that we celebrate, but equally important is the nurses' dedication, motivation, commitment and professionalism. Nurses all over Europe, and the globe play an increasingly and fundamental role in hospitals and in the relationship with the patients and their families.

"Nursing is not simply technical, but knowledge that involves soul, mind and imagination", Florence Nightingale.

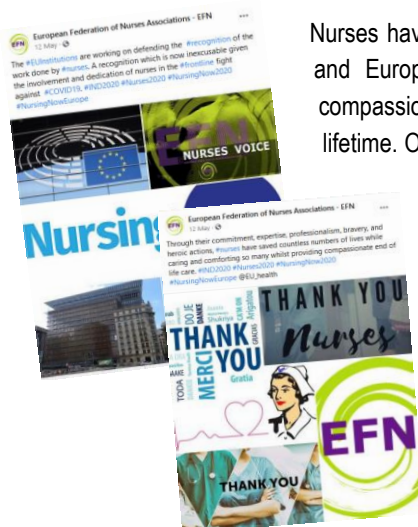
This year this special day had another flavour, with our nurses fighting hard to save the lives of COVID-19 patients. In these very difficult times for all of us, none of them have pulled back from helping and assisting people in need, by sustaining fatigue, stress and social isolation as well as by risking their own health and in some cases their own life. Nurses through their relentless commitment, expertise, professionalism, bravery, and heroic actions have saved countless numbers of lives while caring and comforting so many through their suffering and onto a path of recovery whilst providing compassionate end of life care. It is with great pride [we recognised](#) the individual and the collective efforts of nurses and convinced EU politicians to transform citizens applaud for nurses' selfless commitment, professionalism and bravery into EU policy action. Nurses make a world of difference to people's lives. The contributions nurses have made must be rewarded and [not forgotten!](#)

Therefore, this year, the **EFN social media campaign** for this important day, was even more strengthening the voice of the nurses that every day do their job with passion and conviction, never giving up, even in very hard times of pandemic! You can [see here the report of EFN Social Media Campaign](#), that went online through EFN Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn (Key hashtags: #IND2020 #nurses2020 #NursingNow2020 #NursingNowEurope #COVID19 @EFNBrussels @Europarl_EN @nicogoncas).



» European Parliament President tribute to nurses

Nurses have proven their vital role in providing health services during this pandemic throughout the EU and Europe. There are countless number of humbling and incredible stories of nurses' actions, compassionate care and leadership while facing the greatest relentless global healthcare challenge in a lifetime. On this special year and day for the nurses all over the globe, the EU Institutions recognised the debt of gratitude that is owed to so many selfless nurses who risk their own lives against the backdrop of the worry for their own families and loved ones. This was shown by the European President, David Sassoli, at the European Parliament plenary opening, on 13 May, when he read out an institutional declaration in recognition of the commitment and hard work of nurses.





Sassoli raised that “our shared duty is to ensure nurses can carry out their work in security and to do so efficiently. Countries have made hospitals, healthcare material, equipment available to others thanks to the efforts of civil society. Today we have to strengthen the EU capability in the healthcare field. This is a duty we owed to our citizens”, and explained that the European Parliament had asked for a “European mechanism for a healthcare response to ensure we can work together to prepare a coordinated response to any type of healthcare crisis”.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for a public health policy, which would be more proactive, and which involves greater cooperation in order to build healthcare systems that will be resilient and will ensure a greater solidarity in Europe.

📁 Nursing Special Edition - H13 - Health Europa Quarterly Magazine

To celebrate the year of the Nurse and the Midwife and considering the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EFN Secretary General published in the Health Europa Quarterly Magazine a special edition focusing on nurses and the essential work performed by nurses. As such, [the Issue 13](#), was specially launched on 12 May, at the occasion of the International Nurses' Day. This edition contains [several articles written in partnership with the EFN](#), detailing the work of the nurses and of the EFN, and the need for collaborative synergy across the EU's healthcare sector.



Nurses' crucial role to protect the European citizens' health needs should be translated into EU policies, to be better prepared and pragmatic. This is now also a good opportunity to see how, together with the EU Institutions, we can build the so needed 'Europe of Health'. This is still ongoing work, that we will take further in 2021, knowing that this is a precious opportunity to prepare our health workforce and health systems to be future proofed to respond to current and future threats to the health and wellbeing of our citizens and wider sustainability of our society.

b. Mental Health

COVID-19 crisis showed that it is time to change direction and reconsider our EU health systems! Healthcare professionals have been placed under exceptional stress by the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting their mental health and well-being. Working in such challenging conditions as experienced with COVID-19, has been recognised that in some EU Member States there was a significant psychological health toll on nurses who were continuing to deliver health services in crisis while an entire society was in lockdown, putting their own lives at risk, and being often the only professional with the patient dying.

More than ever, it is crucial to keep our healthcare professionals, and in particular the nurses, protected from chronic stress and poor mental health. Heavy workloads, life-or-death decisions, and risk of infection are sources of stress for all of them. Ensuring their well-being and mental health is key to sustain any pandemic preparedness, response and recovery. If we do not take actions, we risk not being prepared for the next crisis. To make sure this is not happening again, it is important to explore self-help interventions and preventive measures for reducing psychological distress in times of crisis,



see how we can protect their mental health and well-being after it, and appropriate support services should be integrated into every component of national responses to COVID-19. As mentioned in the EFN Report on [‘Lessons Learned from Ebola & COVID-19’](#), appropriate support services must be put in place for nurses to address the impact of the numerous stressors.

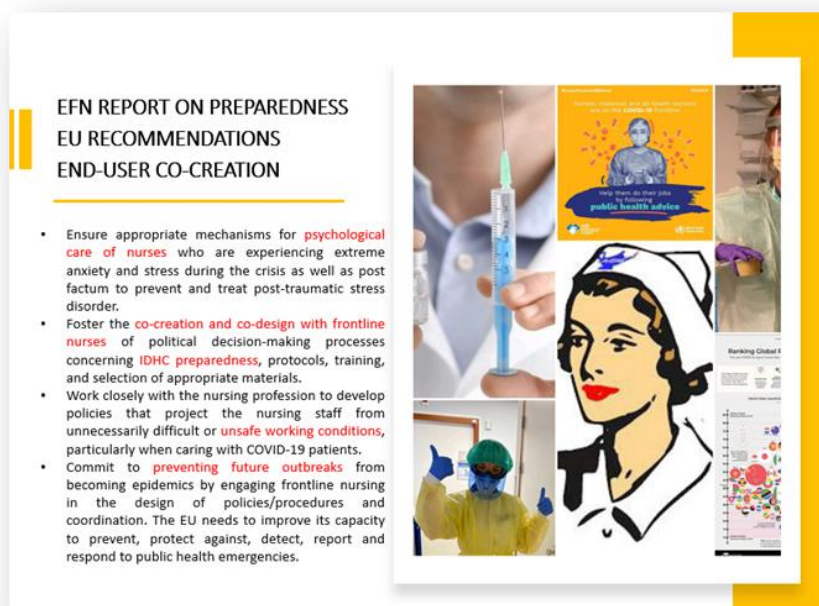
Therefore, to make sure we will always be prepared for any crisis, it is crucial to foster the co-creation and co-design with frontline healthcare professionals, and in particular nurses – the biggest group of the healthcare professionals, of political decision-making processes concerning IDHC preparedness, protocols, training, and selection of appropriate materials; to work closely with the nursing profession to develop policies that protect the nurses from unnecessarily difficult or unsafe working conditions, particularly when caring with COVID-19 patients; and to ensure appropriate mechanisms for psychological care of nurses experiencing extreme stress during the crisis, and post factum, to prevent and treat post-traumatic stress disorder.



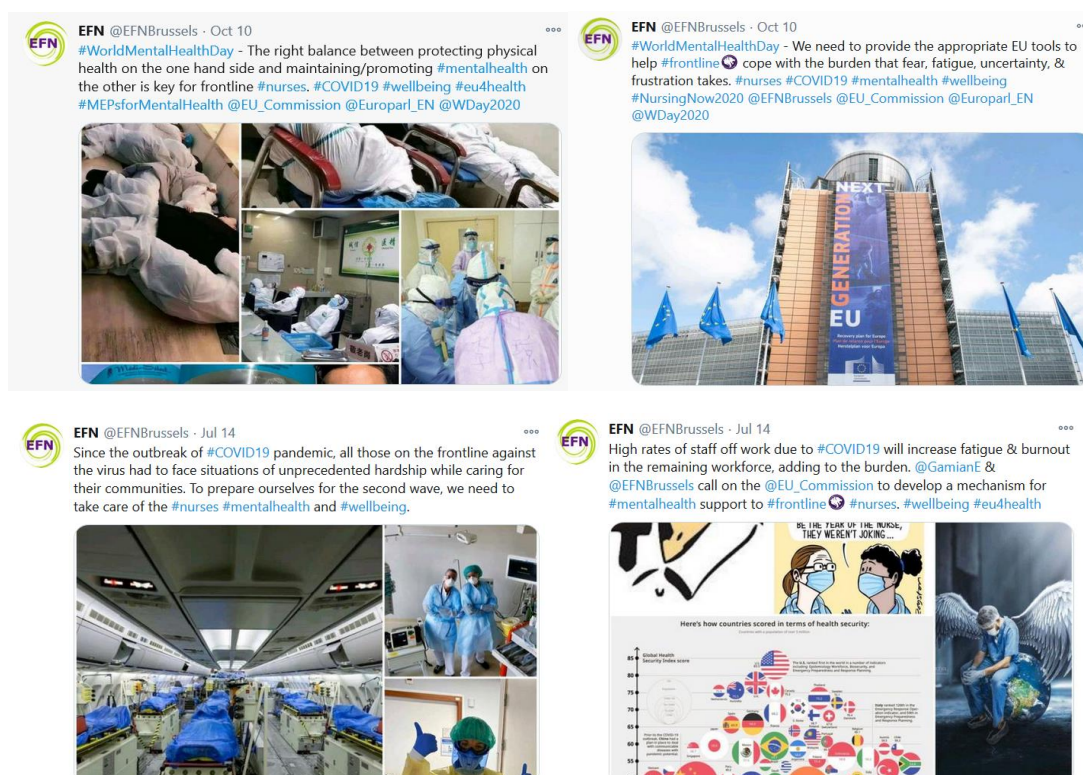
Following this topic closely, the EFN signed a [Joint Statement with GAMIAN](#), in July 2020, reminding the EU institutions and all the EU stakeholders that frontline nurses were facing a critical situation - and that this was where the focus should go, and that by applying the five measures listed below, frontline nurses would be protected from some unnecessary stress and mental suffering. They need time and resources to recover from the first COVID-19 wave - mentally and physically-before tackling the next one.

1. Put in place national and local programmes to support frontline nurses who are caring for COVID-19 patients to preserve their mental health and avoid psychological trauma.
2. Condemn and combat the stigmatisation of nurses taking care of COVID-19 patients e.g. by means of official communications, also making use of the media.
3. Foster the co-creation and co-design of political decision-making processes involving frontline nurses, concerning Infectious Disease of High Consequence preparedness, health protocols, training, and the selection of appropriate equipment.
4. Work closely with the nursing professions to develop policies that protect nursing staff from unnecessarily difficult or unsafe working conditions, particularly when caring for COVID-19 patients.
5. Allocate EU funds to support frontline nurses, re-allocating already agreed on budgets to inject funds into the nursing frontline and nursing research, with the aim to be better prepared for future COVID-19 waves.

Over the year, the EFN followed closely the **several meetings on mental health** organised at EU level, bringing some key insight and information for EFN lobby work, as: **EPA & EPSU Webinar – “The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health of healthcare workers”**, May 2020, which brought together EU Stakeholders and experts to discuss on the impact in the short and long term of the COVID-19 outbreak on the mental health and stress of the healthcare staff involved and what are the main elements observed by experts in those months and what are the good practices already in place; **EPHA-MHE Webinar on “Mental health and wellbeing of healthcare staff in time of pandemic”**, in May 2020, to which the EFN Secretary General was invited as speaker, to discuss on the challenges faced by the nurses and how they can and are addressed – self-help interventions and preventive measures for reducing psychological distress in crisis situations; and how we can protect the mental health of frontline health professionals after the pandemic; **Young Leaders for Health webinar on “COVID-19 and Mental Health: psychosocial considerations for vulnerable populations”**, July 2020, to discuss the latest evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health and how to address it; **MEP Alliance for Mental Health, GAMIAN-Europe and European Psychiatric Association (EPA) Webinar on “Learning from the impact of COVID-19 measures: finding the balance between physical and mental health”**, in July 2020, to address the mental health impact of the measures taken to best manage and control the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the EFN Secretary General was invited as speaker.



Next to these meetings, the EFN raised the issue of mental health in its [social media](#) network (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn). Key words/Hashtags: #nursing #covid #nursingnow #efn #euhealthyworkplaces #horizoneurope #mentalhealth #wellbeing #nursingresearch



c. Research and Innovation

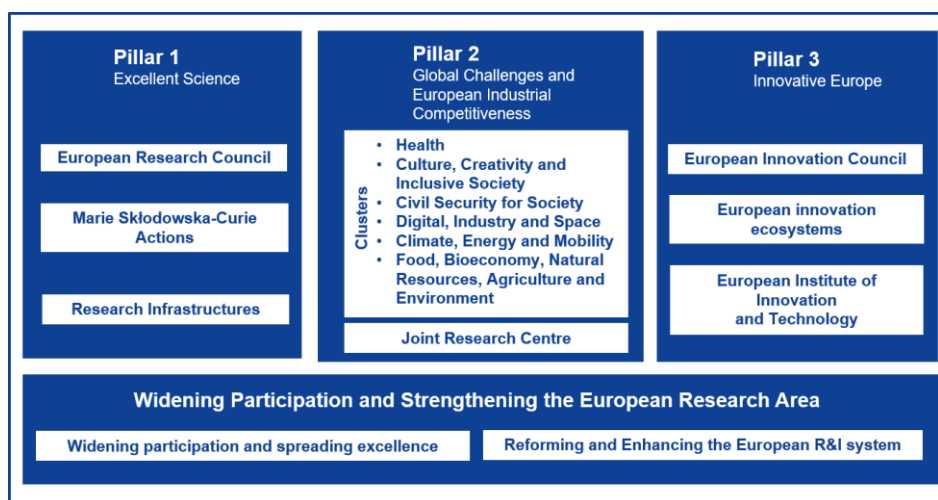
Research and Innovation are key paramount in the development of better health systems in the EU. In times of COVID-19, research and innovation have been more than ever a crucial instrument to drive us in this pandemic. Being a key topic for the nurses, closely linked to the new EU funding programme Horizon Europe (See following point for more information) the EFN has been following this debate and development very closely in 2020.

The need to rebuild the European economy and social damage in light of the COVID-19 crisis has prompted the European Commission to work on a [Recovery Plan](#). There is no doubt that substantial additional resources will be needed to help mitigate the shock from the coronavirus. As stated by Commissioner Gabriel *“there cannot be a trade-off between research and innovation and the recovery”*. The Recovery Plan and the revised [Multiannual Financial Framework](#) (MFF) must not lose sight of the centrality of Research and Innovation in building the EU's Resilience. As an engine central to ensuring Europe's digital competitiveness and to strengthening its innovation capacity and technology development, Research & Innovation is an essential key to recovery from COVID-19. From the European Commission side, this is quite a challenging agenda with the aim of making impact immediately in 2021-2023, with innovation being implementing in different areas in the next 3 years, thanks to the partnerships in different areas (as: Health, transport, digitalisation and industry).

The EFN believes we need to invest as much as we can in research and innovation as it has the power to achieve societal impact and positively transform our societies. To make the change happen and be fit-for-purpose, it crucial that nurses are involved in the co-creation and co-design policies to make better public policies and a better Europe. To learn more on the ongoing developments on this topic, the EFN participated in 2020, in some key EU meetings on Research & Innovation, as the European Research & Innovation Days 2020, in September 2020, the European Commission's annual flagship event, bringing together policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs and the public to debate and shape the future of research and innovation in Europe and beyond. By creating connections between cutting-edge scientific research and the most pressing challenges of a generation, the European Research and Innovation Days represent a unique opportunity to join the conversation and enact real change. Being a key point for the nurses and the nursing profession, the EFN will continue focussing on this point and its developments, trying to bring into the debate the nurses' views and expertise, in 2021.

d. Horizon Europe

Building on the achievements and success of the previous programme ([Horizon 2020](#)) and keeping the EU at the forefront of global research and innovation, the European Commission proposed a new Framework Programme to be launched in January 2021 – [Horizon Europe](#). This new 7-year European Union scientific research initiative is the most ambitious research and innovation programme ever, made as part of the EU's proposal for the next EU long-term budget, the [multiannual financial framework](#) (MFF). Horizon Europe aims to be an evolution (building on the current H2020), and not a revolution, with specific objectives: Support the creation and diffusion of high-quality knowledge; Strengthen the impact of R&I in supporting EU policies; Foster all forms of innovation and strengthen market deployment, building on **3 redesigned pillars**, to give greater coherence, both between and within pillars, in support of the programme objectives:



This programme is aiming to keep the EU at the forefront of global research and innovation and will support European Partnerships to deliver on global challenges and industrial modernisation through concerted Research & Innovation effort with the EU Member States, private sector, foundations and other stakeholders.

For the EFN it is key that this programme plays its greatest role in the field of public health, and that it is used to upscale the resilience of our healthcare systems in the EU, next to making sure that the upcoming [EU4Health programme](#) supports the frontline nursing profession. The Programme should upscale best practices from already existing sustainable effective initiatives led by frontline healthcare professionals. We need to implement at scale during the projects, even at the start at projects. Upscale what already exists and has proven to be impactful. Furthermore, and in the context of the COVID-19, the European Commission has re-drafted parts of the Horizon Europe research programme to allocate €13.5B from COVID-19 recovery fund into it.

“It’s clear that after the crisis we should reorient some of our priorities in a more strategic way. [...]

One of the most important things is really to integrate our lessons learned during the crisis”, said

Research Commissioner Mariya Gabriel.

This is in line with the European Union priorities in the coming years to ensure that healthcare systems are resilient enough to cope well with future pandemic and health emergencies. This movement is aligned with the lobby efforts carried out in cooperation by the EFN and the ENRF to make sure that the EU institutions put a greater focus on healthcare preparedness and investments in the nursing workforce (See EFN recommendations in its [report on “Lessons Learned from Ebola and COVID-19”](#), which main conclusion is that “we are not prepared unless we are all prepared!”). Knowing that this is a key topic in the EFN political agenda, the EFN will follow closely these developments in 2021.

e. EU4Health programme



COVID-19 crisis has highlighted and strengthened the importance of healthcare in the EU’s policy-making processes and clearly proven the European Union’s need for well-defined and adequately financed policy instruments to support healthcare professionals, patients and health systems in Europe. Healthcare, which has always been high in the EU citizens’ agenda, has often been explicitly excluded from policy-making processes due to the EU Member States’ interest in keeping it that way. However, COVID-19 showed that a strong EU-centred health policy would have been very beneficial for tackling this crisis.

Taking this into account, the European Commission has proposed a new, ambitious stand-alone health programme for the 2021-2027 period entitled “[Health4Europe Programme](#)”, in the next [Multiannual Financial Framework](#), with a very ambitious budget of €9.4 billion. This EU4Health programme is aiming at making a significant contribution to the post-COVID-19 recovery by making the EU population healthier, strengthening the resilience of health systems, and promoting innovation in the health sector, next to fulfilling the gaps revealed by the COVID-19 crisis and ensure that the EU health systems will be resilient enough to face new and future health threats.

Representing 3 million nurses in the EU, this is a key issue for the [EFN](#) and its Members. It is important that the nurses in the EU benefit from this programme and participate in its co-creation and implementation across the EU countries. Taking this into account, the EFN participated in 2020, in some meetings where the EU4Health programme was discussed and presented as the EU4Health stakeholders’ seminar, held in June, and hosted by MEP Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, where EU health stakeholders shared their views on the Programme. They all agreed that the new European Commission measures to tackle COVID-19 must address the needs of our healthcare systems and all challenges posed by the pandemic – including the recovery plan. It is crucial that the EU healthcare systems are resilient, efficient, and effective. The EFN will continue to follow this important development in 2021.

f. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly affecting our society, it is transforming the way we all live, the way we interact with each other. The use of AI technologies (and other digital health technologies) to deliver care more cost-effectively is an opportunity to relieve Europe’s strained healthcare system. The European Commission President-Elect Ursula von der Leyen has made clear that her ambition is to ensure that the next five-year EU legislative cycle harnesses the potential of digital innovation to drive improvements in all aspects of healthcare. To support this, she has pledged to create a [European Health Data Space](#) and to adopt legislation on AI.

The nursing workforce, which is the largest healthcare professional of all, will be key in the deployment of AI technologies in healthcare settings. The success (or not) of AI in Europe will largely depend on end-users using them - and they will only do so if they have been rightly involved as co-designers of these technologies, trust them and see they added-value they bring in. And this is what the EFN has been pushing forward in 2020 – To have nurses involved as end-users in the co-creation and co-design of AI. They are the ones who will use tomorrow. Therefore, they need to be involved in it since the very beginning of the developments!

As such, and to make sure the nurses' voice is heard at EU level, the EFN participated in 2020 in some key EU meetings, as: **European Digital SME Alliance debate on “Artificial intelligence in the EU: What are the bottlenecks for SMEs?”**, in April 2020, to discuss on the enormous potential of Artificial Intelligence and how it can act as a decisive enabler for other technologies and transform a variety of processes in various fields and sectors; **EU40 Webinar on “Artificial Intelligence and Data Science – Aiding the fight against Coronavirus?”**, in June 2020, to discuss how different stakeholders can help to fight against COVID-19 through the use of Artificial Intelligence and data science; **University of Vienna (UNIVIE) conference on “Bridging the Gap Between New Technologies, Health Research and the Protection of Personal Data: GDPR Impact”**, in September 2020, to explore the rise of new technologies (more concretely, new algorithms and artificial intelligence); **SBS ICT Forum 2020 on “Policy, Norms & Standardisation of Artificial Intelligence: Challenges and opportunities for SMEs”**, in September 2020, that brought together policymakers, AI experts and SMEs to discuss how standards, AI, and SMEs are connected and how SMEs can benefit from AI standardisation; **Politico virtual AI Summit 2020**, in October 2020, to discuss the future of AI global regulation and the technology's implementation; **CEN-CENELEC Workshop on “Artificial Intelligence in healthcare: paving the way with standardization”**, in October 2020, aiming to highlight the current and future trends of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the healthcare sector, and share expertise. Invited as speaker, the EFN Secretary General explained that *“when developing new AI tools in healthcare, end-user co-creation is key to success”*.



Finally, trying to raise awareness on this key concern for the nurses, the EFN mentioned this on several occasions on its Social Media Network (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) – Key words/Hashtags: #AIStandards4Health #ArtificialIntelligence #healthcare #CoDesign #AI. To read all our posts, see our [social media report on this](#).

g. Climate

Knowing that climate is becoming a key priority at EU level, as its change is evident across and beyond European regions, and in many sectors, as health, and that it is affecting all citizens' quality of life in far-reaching ways, including the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, in 2020, the EFN started to follow climate topic and how nurses can contribute to it as agreed with the EFN Members, in October 2019. Taking into account the new EFN SOLP 2021-2027, this is a key point that will stay within the EFN political agenda for the coming years, as this topic is now part of the new EFN SOLP starting in January 2021.

To make sure to have the latest information on the topic and the ongoing developments/initiatives at EU level, in 2020, the EFN participated in some meetings as: **The European Commission Webinar on “Health Impact of Climate Change: from science to policy”**, held on 2 June, where it was stressed that this is the perfect moment to start the “health” discussion within the Climate Change debate. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public health is looking at healthcare. The ongoing heat waves have been causing many casualties across Europe; **Knowledge4Innovation Webinar on “How Research & Innovation can accelerate the green transition towards a climate-neutral economy?”**, held on 11 June, where it was stressed out that



while the world's leading scientists are looking for a vaccine to the COVID-19 virus, European leaders rebuild the continent's economy, while keeping in mind the commitment made to become fully climate-neutral by 2050, and reaching this objective needs to be based on research and development of clean technologies, innovation and modernisation of EU economy. As such, the new Horizon Europe (2021-2027) main areas includes 'Climate' next to Digital, Industry, **Health**, Mobility, and Energy; **Online High-level conference on "Adaptation to Climate change & the World of Work"**, held on 8 September, which concluded the project conducted by ETUC to identify the impacts of climate change on workers and their better involvement in adaptation policies. The EFN Secretary General was invited as keynote speaker to express how the frontline nurses would be impacted by the consequences of the climate change and how the nursing profession can bring its experience and expertise into this policy debate. Paul expressed that it will be key to empower nurses to empower individuals, families and communities to make healthy lifestyle choices and change own practices.

Furthermore, as part of the [European Green Deal](#), the European Commission was seeking to gather insight into the climate challenges, objectives, and priorities for its new strategy on climate, the **EFN provided in June its input to the open public consultation on "New EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change"**, where the EFN called on the EU Institutions and the national governments to: prioritise the development of policies and agreements that favour climate solutions and protect public health and global equity; Include ministries of health and health civil society, especially nurses' associations and organisations in the EU and national decision making process to ensure climate ambition and strategies are designed to maximally protect health and improve global equity; To invest in the education of the nursing workforce, as part of Lifelong Learning programmes, to facilitate nurses' roles as change agents and their further development of knowledge, skills and competences in the field of climate change and mitigation of negative effects of growing temperatures.

Climate change and its direct consequences on public health is a growing concern for public health stakeholders and policy makers, and taking into account that evidence has shown that the climate crises puts the lives and wellbeing of billions of people at increased risk, and that the nurses can make the difference, the EFN Members approved, at the EFN General Assembly, 15 October 2020, an [EFN Policy Statement on the nurses' Contribution to Tackle Climate change](#). The nursing profession, which is the most trusted healthcare profession of all, and who is at the frontline of patient care, play a pivotal role in tackling climate change within the healthcare sector and in educating their patients on how to live healthier and more climate-friendly lives. The EFN will, therefore, continue in 2021 to strengthen the role of nurses as key actors for tackling climate change within the healthcare settings they operate in and with their patients.

Finally, trying to raise awareness on this key concern for the nurses, the EFN conducted on 8 September, within the scope of ETUC meeting on Climate, a small climate change campaign on its Social Media Network (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) – Key words/Hashtags: #nurses #climatechange #wellbeing #healthcare #nursingnow #efn #healthpromotion #climate #healtheffects. To read all our posts, see our [social media report](#).





EFN @EFNBrussels · Sep 8

As the number of [#climate](#) change diseases is on the rise, so will be the number of [#patients](#) in need of [#care](#). [#Nurses](#) will need to step in to treat the negative [#healtheffects](#) of [#climatechange](#). [#ClimateAdaptation](#) [#nurses2020](#) @etuc_ces @EFN_Brussels

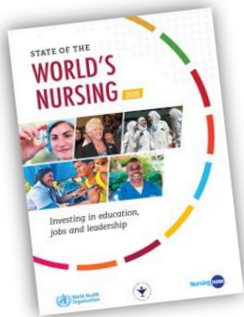


EFN @EFNBrussels · Sep 8

The things most needed by [#frontlinenurses](#) & the [#nursingprofession](#) to better tackle [#climatechange](#) are: highly qualified & motivated nurses; better CPD mechanisms for [#nurses](#) to follow courses; own leadership to develop fit-for-purpose policies & procedures. [#ClimateAdaptation](#)



h. The State of the World's Nursing Report launched on World Health Day



The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), in partnership with the [International Council of Nurses](#) (ICN) and [Nursing Now](#), published on 7 April 2020 the first ever '[State of the World's Nursing](#)' report, aiming at fostering investment in the nursing workforce as a mean to achieve the [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), especially in Education (SDG4), Gender (SDG5), Economic Growth (SDG8). For the EFN and its Members, this report is key as it [analyses](#) the contribution of nurse's healthcare systems worldwide, as well as the major challenges the workforce is facing. More than ever, nurses are being put at very high contribution since the beginning of COVID-19, working sometimes in very hard-working conditions and this report is key to lobby the EU governments and Institutions to make the profession to a next level. We all know that nurses make a central contribution to national and global developments related to health priorities, universal health

coverage, mental health, non-communicable diseases, emergency preparedness and response, patient safety, and the delivery of integrated and people-centred care. It is now time for EU and global leaders to invest in education, jobs, and leadership for the nursing profession, the most trusted profession of all the healthcare professions by citizens across the globe. As such, nurses should be empowered accordingly! The EFN will continue following up on the nursing developments that will raise from this report, in 2021.

i. Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition

Nurses are at the frontline of care, 24/7, and always by the patient side - in conflict areas. However, nurses who are at conflictive areas taking care of wounded and people in need are often exposed to risks and dangers proper of the environment they are working on. Nurses are often left unprotected when situations worsen, and security forces leave. Taking this into account and following up in the work the EFN already did in several previous General Assemblies (namely in October 2016, in Madrid, March 2017, in Brussels, in which the EFN members endorsed the [EFN Statement on Nurses in Conflict Areas](#), and in October 2017, in Dublin), the EFN Members decided at the EFN October 2020 General Assembly, that the EFN should continue being a **member of the [Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition](#)** international steering group by endorsing the mission of the Coalition.

Created in 2010 by leading international organisations to address the lack of international systematic reliable reporting mechanisms on violations recognising that there is an on-going significant under-reporting of this problem, membership of the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition is open to organisations that share its purpose and commit to support its objectives. Violence against healthcare workers, facilities and patients is one of the most serious and overlooked humanitarian challenges in the world today. In recent years, the frequency and severity of attacks on health workers, patients, hospitals, and clinics throughout the world have increased. During armed conflict or civil disturbances, assaults on health facilities, health professionals, and the patients they serve are all too common. In addition to the human toll, these attacks compromise the ability to deliver care to



populations in great need, impede efforts to reconstruct health systems after war, and lead to the flight of health professionals whose presence in a time of great social stress is essential.

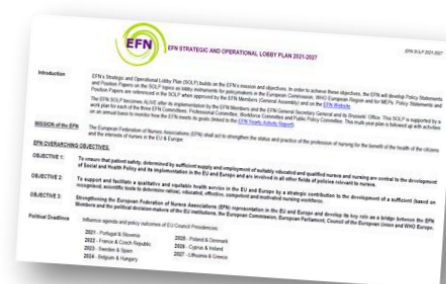
History has proven that conflict is not limited to borders and could occur in any region at any point in time. Therefore, it was seen as key for the EFN to take part in this. From a European perspective it is important that we stand in solidarity and support the work of the Coalition to protect health professionals, health facilities and patients during times of conflict.

j. Cancer-related comorbidities

Cancer has been put very high in the EU health policy agenda, with namely the launch of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, aiming at putting the EU and its Members States at the centre of the global fight against cancer, increasing available funds for research, prevention, early detection, palliative care and treatment. As such, and taking into account the crucial role nurses play in this, the EFN followed closely these developments as they link to EFN's advocacy work undertaken over the last years on '[continuity of care](#)', '[moving care back to the community](#)', and '[patient empowerment](#)'. Nurses are very well equipped to do all these, as well as to accompanying cancer patients through all the stages of their disease: from detection to treatment, and then through their life after cancer or palliative care. Taking this debate to the next stage, and linked to the discussions on the [cancer-related comorbidities and complications initiative](#), the EFN signed together with other 20 EU Stakeholders, [a joint statement "Making cancer-related complications and comorbidities an EU health priority"](#), calling on the EU policy makers to make cancer complications and comorbidities a priority in the [EU Cancer Plan](#).

5. EFN new Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan (SOLP) for 2021-2027

And last, but not least, the development of a new EFN SOLP. Taking into account that the EFN SOLP 2014-2020 was coming to an end, it was key to develop a new one, starting by having an overview of the achievements of the lobby work done so far by the EFN, to inform the design of a new SOLP 2021-2027. Therefore, the EFN started by doing an evaluation of the EFN SOLP 2014-2020, on the outcomes achieved and learn about EFN strengths and weaknesses, knowing that the core lobby business of the EFN is carried out in accordance with the mandate stemming from the EFN SOLP.



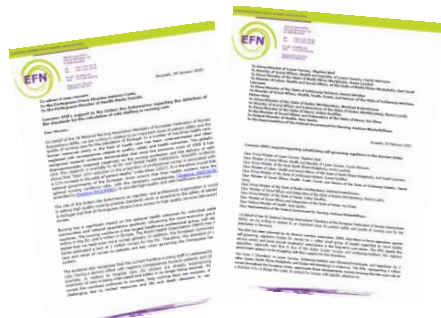
Furthermore, it is key to listen to the EU legislators and explore where they see the EFN lobby efforts being used in an efficient and effective way. In the long run, lobbying is about building alliances and creating win-win scenarios. Based on these two steps, the EFN Members discussed, amended, and approved the items to be included in the [new EFN SOLP 2021-2027](#), that was approved at the EFN October 2020 General Assembly. This new EFN SOLP, which keeps the **mission of the EFN** the same as our challenges remain the same: *"to strengthen the status and practice of the profession of nursing for the benefit of the health of the citizens and the interests of nurses in the EU and Europe"*, and the same **three overarching objectives**: *"1/ To ensure that patient safety, nurses and nursing are central to the development of Social and Health Policy and its implementation in the EU and Europe; 2/ To support and facilitate a qualitative and equitable health service in the EU and Europe by a strategic contribution to the development of a sufficient, effective, competent and motivated workforce of nurses; 3/ Strengthening the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) representation in the EU and Europe and develop its key role as a bridge between the National Nurses' Association/Organisation (NNA) and/or section of National Healthcare Workers Associations/Organisations and the decision-makers in the EU institutions"*, gives the EFN Brussels Office and the EFN Members the proper mandate to go after what we all have agreed on. This new SOLP will run from 1st January 2021 till 31st December 2027, with an intermediate evaluation expected to take place in 2024.

To achieve the objectives set out in the EFN SOLPs, the EFN co-designs Policy Statements linked to specific political and policy topics. These are documents of a political and professional nature reflecting the EFN Members' views and demands on that topic. Within the three overarching objectives, and the three respective Committees, many new concrete lobby actions to implement the EFN mission have been approved, based on EFN lobby experience with the EU Institutions. However, there are many lobby activities from the 2014-2020 EFN SOLP that still stay with us (such as the EU DIR55), as these are ongoing topics, but new topics as 'climate change' have been introduced.

All the previous EFN's SOLPs are available on the [EFN website](#).

6. EFN Members' Lobby Opportunities

It is crucial for the EFN, as a Pan European Organisation, to continuously support and strengthen its relationship with its members by getting a real sense of what is important to them at national level. Taking part in national events is an ideal way of strengthening ties with the members but it is crucial for understanding the key issues at stake in Member States and offering, in return, the EU-level perspective. The EFN appreciates these moments with its members and continues investing in national, regional and local events that promotes the EU nurses' voice. But participating in meetings is not enough to get the political message through to national policy makers understanding the importance of the nurses' views and concerns in the policy process and in the daily clinical practice. As such, it is important for the members to get EFN support directly addressed to key political players to help them to push for their key concerns at national level. As such, in 2020, the EFN provided its support through some supporting letters, and by participating in key national events.



The EFN members have been struggling with their governments wanting to downgrade the nursing education and create cheap nurses. This year, as in previous years, some EFN Members, as Germany, Portugal, Malta (See here [Maltese News here](#) and [here](#)), asked the **EFN to send supporting letters** to their national governments stressing that ensuring appropriate education and qualifications of general care nurses, and allowing opportunities to advance the nursing profession are key to guaranteeing the sustainability of the health workforce and ensuring the willingness of young people to choose nursing as a career path. It is crucial that EU national governments make sure that their health systems have the necessary nursing workforce, with the necessary competences, to provide high-quality and

safe healthcare services. This applies to those national governments in the process of accession.

Organised by the [Italian Nurses Association](#) and the [European Association for the History of Nursing](#), from 13 to 15 February 2020, in Florence, the city where Florence Nightingale's was born, the [conference](#) gathered nurses, historians, civil and political authorities from national & EU level, to celebrate Florence Nightingale's Bicentennial discussing on the history of nursing, and highlighting current research across a wide field of endeavour. Invited as keynote speaker the EFN Secretary General [stressed](#) the "Nursing History strengthened by EU Legislation" and how still nowadays Florence Nightingale's work, as statistician and lobbyist, is influencing EU politics with nursing data, and how most of her legacy is what EFN is still fighting for at the EU level today. Directive 2013/55/EU, Proportionality Directive, European Social Pillar, Sharps Injuries' Directive, are some examples of concrete legislative outcomes EFN has pushed forward with positive outcomes.



Following the cancellation of their Annual Scientific Congress (postponed to 2021), and in the context of the International year of the nurse and Nursing Now, the **National Federation of Nurses of Belgium (FNIB)** organised in Brussels, on 29 October 2020, a TV reportage (See [video here](#)) to thank and pay tribute to all the Belgium nurses working hard to fight COVID-19. Invited as speaker, the EFN Secretary General thanked all the nurses for their daily work, especially in these difficult times, which shows they are the backbone of any healthcare system. He reminded that the profession is not always politically recognised and urged the EU Council of

Ministers, the European Commission, the European Parliament to take joint actions. A strategic partnership is key.



EFN Focus

Ensuring that **nurses and patients** play a **central role** in the social and health policy at European and Member State levels

EFN key focus is to lobby EU institutions:

- ✓ Healthcare **expenditure** and efficiency
- ✓ Shift from inpatient care to **primary care**
- ✓ **Long-term care** and to the ageing population
- ✓ Working **conditions** of nurses



European Federation of Nurses Associations - Nurses' Voice

INMO



On 28 November, Elizabeth Adams, EFN President, represented EFN at the INMO Public Health Nurses and Community Health Nurses National Conference. This was a good opportunity to inform the participants on the ongoing challenges for EU nurses and to present the EFN and its key priorities.

7. European Women Award to EFN



European nurses are exemplifying European values each day through their commitment to their fellow citizens. Particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses across Europe have provided care in hospitals, elderly care homes and within private family homes to those who needed it most. In this special year for the nurses, the EFN, representing 3 million nurses, most of them women, had the very good surprise and the honour to be nominated for the [2020 Women of Europe Awards](#), in the 'Woman in Action' category. A nomination that recognises nurses' dedication and thanks them for the contribution that they make to Europe every day.

The Women of Europe Awards, co-organised by the [European Movement International](#) and the [European Women's Lobby](#), aim to recognise, celebrate and inspire women of all backgrounds, who have made extraordinary contributions to promoting European issues and advancing women's rights and gender equality in Europe. In 2020, the Women of Europe Awards decided to nominate the women nurses of Europe who have been so instrumental in working on the

frontlines and to celebrate their essential work during the COVID-crisis. This was seen as a very powerful opportunity, especially during this time of the COVID crisis. The EFN, was thus seen as the key player to be nominated for the prize, on behalf of all the women nurses it represents. The EFN was nominated in the "Woman in Action" category, next to women: Maryan Abdulkarim, Writer & Artist; and Malda Avramenko, Mediator & Activist for Roma Families and Children in Ventspils.

The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) is

proud to

announce that

the EU nurses as members of EFN [have been awarded](#) the prestigious 2020 Women of Europe Awards.

The EFN was nominated by the European Women's Lobby for the [nurses' instrumental role](#) and exceptional commitment to working on the frontline during the COVID-crisis, providing expert care 24/7 at the bedside of patients, in the most difficult unprecedented circumstances, risking their own lives and that of their loved ones. Throughout this COVID-19 crisis, the important lifesaving work that frontline nurses do daily has been brought to the forefront and Europeans across the

continent are aware and appreciate the invaluable nature of nursing.



Special mention is appropriate for all the EFN Members - the National Nursing Associations in the EU and Europe - for their ongoing commitment to EFN and their relentless support within their countries incredible and professional frontline nurses whose expertise and knowledge is central to saving lives and comforting patients in extremely difficult working conditions, all the while maintaining essential support services to those who require healthcare.

"We are genuinely overwhelmed and delighted for this exceptional recognition. It is just wonderful for the millions of frontline nurses across Europe that have relentlessly and selflessly provided life-saving care to the Citizens of Europe during the pandemic while risking their own health and that of their families. This is a great surprise, and our nurses are so honoured to receive this prestigious award. With so little real recognition for their commitment and bravery this is so valued, cherished and celebrated award for all our nurses and their families" [said Elizabeth Adams](#), EFN President



II. EU PROJECTS

A. QUALITY MENTORSHIP FOR DEVELOPING COMPETENT NURSING STUDENTS (QUALMENT) - ERASMUS+ PROJECT



Co-financed under Erasmus+ and coordinated by the [College of Nursing in Celje](#) (Slovenia), this 28 months' [project](#), that started in September 2018 is addressing the clinical mentor's lack in nursing education and developing a clinical mentor's competence with mentor education for national and international nursing students. To ensure the systematic approach, the project is developing Clinical mentors' competence model what provides new knowledge and findings regarding the current situation of clinical mentoring in nursing study programmes in Europe. This model will introduce most important concepts to be integrated into education of clinical mentoring and will be used as a base to prepare a course of advanced mentorship competences. This course will empower clinical mentors with high-quality skills and competences needed to perform their role and at the same time fill the gap, as there is no systematic approach in developing and implementing the quality courses offering mentors' competences to the nurses in clinical environment in EU. Mentoring guidelines with clear and simple instructions to be used in the daily clinical practice of mentoring will be another output of the project.

The EFN is a partner on this project whose role relates to [dissemination](#) activities, such as social media, regular eBulletins, project leaflet, and Website. The EFN plays a key role implementing the project's outcome in the EU level. Moreover, the EFN is actively engaging with project partners to ensure that all undergraduate nursing study programmes in the nursing field are developed according to the EU directive (2005/36/EC amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and the [EFN Competency Framework](#).

The [partners](#) in the project are: [College of Nursing in Celje](#) (Slovenia); [University of Oulu](#) - Research unit for Nursing Science and Health Management (Finland); [University of Alicante](#) (Spain); [Lithuanian University of Health Sciences](#) (Lithuania); and the [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#) (Belgium).

» **Project Development (Meetings & Deliverables)**

In the context of COVID-19, QualMent activities were put on hold in March 2020. The latest development was the testing of the [mentorship modules](#) across Europe, at different pilot sites (Finland, Lithuania, Slovenia and Spain). However, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences continued teaching mentor's education, within the framework of the project, despite the challenging COVID-19 pandemic. The course taught addressed the clinical mentor's skills development in nursing student mentorship and developing the clinical mentor's competences in line with Directive 2013/55/EU (Art 31) and includes three modules: 1) General competence module; 2) Module on mentoring culturally and linguistically diverse nursing students; 3) Module on evaluation and reflective discussion in mentoring of nursing students.



The project, which was due to finish in December 2020, will be prolonged till the end of August 2021, which will allow sufficient time for the pilot testing of the modules under optimal conditions.

» Dissemination

Leading the development of this [activity](#), aiming to inform all the EU stakeholders and policy-makers, the EFN took it forward even in times of pandemic, trying to inform as much as possible on the ongoing project developments and key EU initiatives, through:

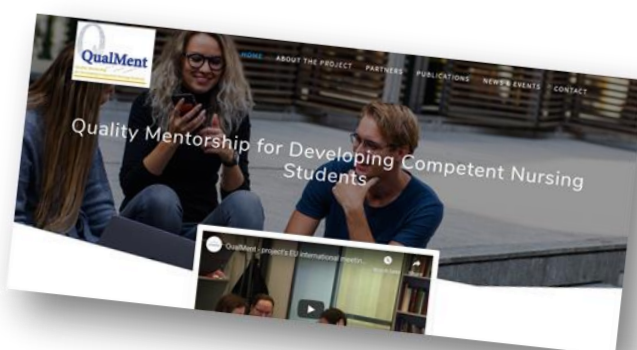


<< eBulletins

[May 2020](#) & [September 2020](#)

Project Website >>

Including the most relevant information on the [project](#).



<< Social media - Facebook & Twitter
(@QualMentProject)

EFN Internal & External meetings >>

Another way to make the project and its developments known is through disseminating it in meetings at EU, national or local levels. From an EFN perspective, the project was disseminated in meetings as:

- » EFN General Assemblies
- » EFN Executive Committee meetings
- » Meetings with European Commissioners & MEPs
- » EU events in which the EFN participates in the European Commission, the European Parliament, EU Stakeholders events, in Brussels or abroad.

EFN Website >>

In charge of the dissemination of the project, the EFN included a [section dedicated to the project](#) in its Website with some key information on the project.

The homepage of the EFN [Website](#) is key in this process of dissemination of the project. As such, whenever it is key, the EFN mentions the project in some of the news it publishes on the homepage.



<< EFN Updates

The EFN uses its Newsletter (EFN Update) to spread information on the project to its Members and other key EU health alliances. In 2019, the EFN mentioned QualMent its Updates of: [January-February-March 2020](#). See more: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=875

B. ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS (EHR) H2020 EU PROJECTS

The EFN is a partner in two EU-funded projects, both started in January 2019, with the objective to ensure a greater engagement of nurses and end-users in the development of electronic health records, and working to empower citizens as managers of their own health, unlocking health data from local silos, and encouraging a bottom-up approach for EHR Interoperability. All of these fit within the nursing profession work on integrated care and continuity of care, in which frontline nurses play a central role.

↳ INTEROPERABLE EHR AT USER EDGE (INTEROPEHRATE)



Coordinated by Engineering Ingegneria Informatica (Italy), this 42 months H2020 [EU project](#) (under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme - grant agreement: No. 826106), which started in January 2019, is developing a standardized and unique European extended-EHR to preserve the European assets and

professional ways of working, by addressing the current lack of standardization and security, defining a set of integrated protocols and conformance criteria for mobile apps, supporting secure and portable local storage and backup, released as open specifications. Moreover, the project will integrate these new protocols with technologies for information extraction and translation, to reduce the difficulties in health data exchange related to the different terminologies and languages adopted in different European countries and by different healthcare providers. It aims at providing the European citizens with a complete view of their health history, shareable with healthcare professionals and researchers.

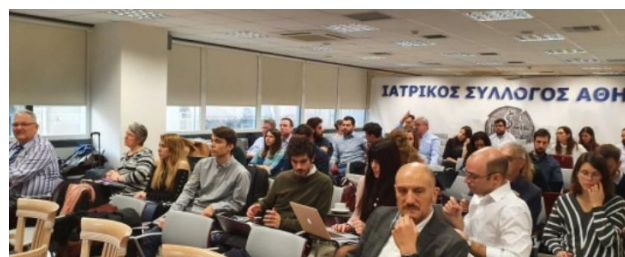
The EFN is representing the nurses as end-users, contributing to define nurse-requirements and scenarios to be supported by the new EHR interoperability. The EFN is responsible for dissemination activities at the EU level, as well as assisting in the implementation of the project's outcome once it is finished.

The partners in the project are: [Engineering – Ingegneria Informatica Spa](#) (IT); [Andaman7](#) (BE); [European Health Telematics Association](#) (BE); [DTCA Hygeia – Diagnostic and Therapeutic Center of Athens](#) (EL); [University of Trento](#) (IT); [University of Vienna - School of Law](#) (AT); [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#) (BE); [Fondazione Toscana Gabriele Monasterio per la Ricerca Medica e di Sanitapubblica](#) (IT); [Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Liege](#) (BE); [Ubitech Limited](#) (CY); [University of Piraeus Research Center](#) (EL); ["Bagdasar-Arseni" Clinical Emergency Hospital of Bucharest](#) (RO); [Siveco Romania Sa](#) (RO); [Fraunhofer Institute for Software and Systems Engineering](#) (DE); [Iatrikos Syllogos Athinon](#) (EL); [Byte Computer S.A.](#) (EL).

» Project Meetings

i. 4th Plenary meeting

The project partners met on 14-16 January 2020, in Greece for their 4th Plenary meeting, hosted by the Medical Association of Athens (ISA) and Hygeia Hospital. Over these three days, the participants were briefed on all that was achieved during the first year of the project, including the development of three theoretical scenarios that are serving as the basis for developing the new systems for EHR. The project partners then discussed the next steps of the project, and the deliverables to be submitted for Year 2 of the project. Finally, the EHR IT developers took this opportunity to meet with the end-users, including EFN, to discuss on the project and deliverables' co-design.



See EFN Social Media @EFNBrussels – Key words/Hashtags: [#InteropEHRate](#) [#EHR](#) [#EFN](#) [#IEHR](#) [#endusers](#) [#digitalisation](#) [#H2020](#)



ii. 5th Plenary meeting

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the project partners met online, for the 5th Plenary meeting of the project, held over 4 half days - on 20-22-23-24 July 2020. The partners were briefed on the latest developments of the project and discussed on some key points as: next steps of scenarios & data (Requirements & validation); the state of the art of the project from a functional and security point of view (Protocols & Security); How tools and services are applied in each scenario (Conversion & translation in scenarios); Pilots, GDPR and Ethical issues; Contribution to standards; Communication & Dissemination activities; and KPIs and Risks.



iii. Mid-term Public Workshop

The project organised a [Mid-term Public Workshop](#), on 20-21 October 2020, online, to present the participants how citizens can access and share their personal health data with [interopEHRate](#) solutions. The stakeholders, experts and industry were [briefed](#) on the ongoing developments of the project and its first results, demos and plans. This successful [workshop](#), in which the EFN participated represented by 3 nurses Asija Delalic (Croatia/UK - in the panel 'Stakeholders' feedback on InteropEHRate approach and impact'), Stefania Di Mauro (Italy), Dorota Kilanska (Poland).



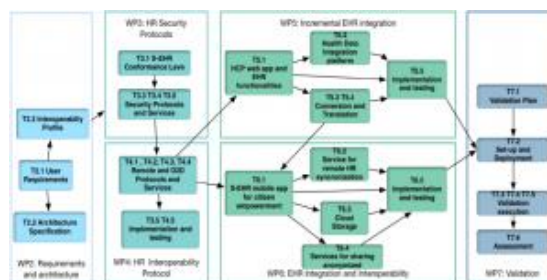
iv. 1st Project European Commission Review

The project partners, including EFN, participated in the 1st project review from the European Commission, that took place in Luxembourg on 13 February 2020. The aim of this meeting was to review the project activities and examine if the work plan and the objectives had been carried out, and the deliverables due by M12 completed. Overall, the project was compliant with the project grant agreement obligations, except for small details that had to be explained and corrected. The date for the next review is still to be defined. The Partners took this opportunity to be altogether in Luxembourg to have a "dress-rehearsal" between project partners, on 12 February, in preparation for the official project review with the European Commission officials the following day. Following on this, the WP leaders and Consortium Management Board members, including EFN,

met online, in March 2020, to discuss the results of the review, and see how to take further the action points as highlighted by the Commission Coordinators.

v. Work Packages meetings

The EFN is involved in several Work Packages (WPs), namely in WP2 (Architecture for cross-border HR integration); WP5 (Incremental EHRs integration); WP6 (Citizen centered HR interoperability); WP7 (Validation of results); WP8 (Impact, Standardization and Governance); WP9 (Communication, Dissemination and Collaboration), and as such has been participating in all the teleconferences organised over the year. In 2020, the EFN followed the developments of all of them, by participating in all the WPs monthly web calls and in providing its input whenever requested and where needed for all the related Deliverables. Believing it is important to have the nurses' view in other WPs that are of key relevance, the EFN participated in the discussions/calls of WP3 (HR security and privacy protocols) and WP4 (HR interoperability protocols).



» External meetings

i. EHTEL Workshop on Health data ecosystems for integrated care – June 2020

Launched as part of the “[Imagining 2029 work programme](#)”, InteropEHRate partners, including EFN, were invited to participate in this [workshop](#) which objective was to explore what health data ecosystems are and how can be built to benefit health and care integration, and identify the building blocks and steering elements that frame a health data ecosystem (data protection, standards, business, and governance models). The webinar focused on what health data ecosystems are and how they can be built to benefit health and care integration. It aimed to identify the building blocks and steering elements that frame a health data ecosystem (data protection, standards, business, and governance models). The participants concluded that the health data ecosystems need the right environment to operate. To make an ecosystem value-based for all stakeholders, it needs right coordination. To get value of an ecosystem, one needs to actively participate and contribute to it. Many of the changes that COVID-19 brought to the health data ecosystem will stay after the pandemic is over.

» Deliverables

InteropEHRate aims at developing open interchange protocols supporting patient-centred exchange of health records between patients, healthcare actors and researchers. As such, over the duration of the project, some key [deliverables](#) need to be provided. In 2020, all the milestones for this second phase of the project were achieved since all deliverables concerning requirements, architecture and specifications, were submitted to the European Commission, that will now analyse them. The EFN provided input to most of them, making sure the nurses' views, as end-users, were reflected in it. The project partners will continue developing the next deliverables in 2021.

👉 CITIZEN-CENTRED EU-EHR EXCHANGE FOR PERSONALISED HEALTH (SMART4HEALTH)

Smart4Health

Coordinated by UNINOVA (Instituto de Desenvolvimento de Novas Tecnologias (Portugal), this 50 months [EU project](#) (under the European

Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme - grant agreements No. 826117), that started on 1st January 2019, is addressing the current challenges in EHR with an outstanding consortium that is developing, testing and validating a platform prototype for the Smart4Health citizen-centred health record EU-EHR exchange. The goal is to deploy citizen-centred solutions and services in a digital single market for wellbeing and healthcare, through an easy-to-use, secure, constantly accessible and portable health data and services prototype, thus advancing citizens' health and wellbeing, and digital health innovation. The EFN is representing the end-users, facilitating a co-design with nurses' representatives. The EFN is responsible for dissemination activities at the EU level, as well as assisting in the implementation of the project's outcome once it has finished.

The partners in the project are: [Instituto De Desenvolvimento De Novas Tecnologias-Associacao](#) (PT); [Hasso-Plattner-Institut](#) (DE); [Data4Life](#) (DE); [Healthmatrix](#) (DE); [University of Vienna](#) (Austria); [University Hospital Aachen](#) (DE); [Maastricht University Hospital](#) (NL); [Information Technology For Translational Medicine](#) (LU); [Knowledge Biz](#) (PT); [Elixir - Luxembourg Centre for Systems Biomedicine](#) (Lu); [Icahn School Of Medicine At Mount Sinai](#) (US); [Zs Unternehmen Gesundheit](#) (DE);

[Ospedale San Raffaele](#) (IT); [Stéftung Hëllef Doheem](#) (Luxembourg); [EASPD](#) (BE); [European Federation of Nurses Associations](#) (BE); [Região autónoma da Madeira](#) - Secretaria Regional Da Economia, Turismo e Cultura (PT); [Laboratoire Virtuel Européen](#) (BE).

» **Project Meetings**

i. **3rd General Assembly**

The Smart4health partners met in Potsdam, Germany, on 22-23 January 2020, for their 3rd General Assembly. This 2-days' meeting, organised by [HPI](#) (Hasso Plattner Institute), was a good opportunity for all the partners to exchange views and reflect on the project developments in its first year of life – concretely some mock-ups of the platform being developed, the refinement of some “citizen-use cases” around which the platform will address specific needs of potential users, and some details about the future's app architecture. Despite its underlying complexity, it will be fit-for-purpose and user-friendly. Finally, partners discussed and agreed on all that is needed to achieve during the second year of the project. See EFN Social Media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram) @EFNBrussels (Key words: [#EHR](#) [#Smart4health](#) [#endusers](#) [#H2020](#) [#nurses](#) @EFNBrussels @4healthEU)



ii. **4th General Assembly**



Due to COVID-19, the project partners could not meet face-to-face, as foreseen. As such, the project coordinator organised the project 4th General Assembly, online, on 23 September 2020. The participants had the opportunity to be briefed on the ongoing developments of the project and review the status of all WPs and how were impacted or not by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the project progressed well despite COVID-19 (even if some tasks were delayed, and some CUCs faced some recruiting problems). The next Smart4Health General Assembly will take place in January 2021. See EFN Social Media @EFNBrussels (Key words: [#EHR](#) [#Smart4health](#) [#endusers](#) [#H2020](#) [#nurses](#) @EFNBrussels)

iii. **Work Packages Meetings**

The EFN is involved in several Work Packages (WPs), namely in WP1 (Citizen- and Professional-User participation: user requirements and performance criteria); WP2 (4HealthPlatform data layer implementation); WP3 (4HealthNavigator portal: services and applications layer implementation); WP4 (Citizen Use Cases: Citizens' health in daily life, work, and healthcare settings); WP6 (Dissemination, Exploitation, Sustainability and Communication); WP7 (Management Administration and Liaison Activities); WP8 (Ethics requirements), and as followed closely, in 2020, their developments. As such the EFN participated in all the regular/monthly teleconferences organised over the year by all the WPs EFN is involved in, and provided input whenever requested and where needed in all the related Deliverables, believing it is crucial that nurses' expertise and view are taken into account in the final documents,

» **Deliverables**

The project aims to provide a citizen-centred health platform compliant with EU legislation; a citizen's secure access to own health data and sharing; citizen's empowerment to provide feedback and cooperate with healthcare providers as well as to donate data for societal benefit. As such, it will develop, test and validate a platform prototype for the Smart4Health citizen-centred health record with integrated abilities for aggregation of data, for sharing and for data provision/donorship to the scientific community. To follow-up on this development, the project partners continued, in 2020 to develop all the milestones for this second phase of the project. These are now achieved since all deliverables were submitted to the European Commission, that will now analyse them. The EFN provided input to most of them. The project partners will continue developing the next deliverables in 2021, building on the ones already provided in 2019 & 2020.

EFN DISSEMINATION FOR BOTH EHR PROJECTS

The dissemination activities for EU projects take advantage of the networks of all the partners in the consortium, leading to reach out specific targeted and wider audiences. This is particularly relevant for the activities addressed to policy-oriented and exploitation targets. To increase the visibility of the project and, as such, create awareness of its deployment and exploitation, establish an impact in the European field of EHR is key, as is making this information available in a suitable format to citizens and stakeholders in order to increase the adoption of the project research results. The pan-European multi-stakeholder networks of EFN together with the respective communication activities of all the partners play a crucial role in this task. The EFN has been active in advertising the two projects across EU-related events, EFN Website, and EFN social media.

EU and internal meetings >>

A way to make a project and its developments known is through disseminating it in meetings at EU, national, or local levels. In 2020, the EFN took all the opportunities to inform the EU stakeholders and EU policy makers on both projects and ongoing developments, as:

- » EFN General Assemblies
- » EFN Executive Committee meetings
- » EFN events (e.g.: [EFN high-level meeting](#) at the European Parliament on digitalisation)
- » Meetings with European Commissioners & MEPs (e.g.: with DG CONNECT, DG SANTE)
- » EU events in which the EFN participated, mostly online in this times of COVID-19, organised by the European Commission, the European Parliament, the EU Stakeholders, etc. (e.g.: International Conference on the History of Nursing – February 2020; DG Santé meeting on COVID-19 – May 2020; [Coalition for Vaccination meeting](#) – March 2020; [2nd EU-China Health summit](#) – October 2020; [EuropaBio Patients BioForum 2020](#) – October 2020; [CEN-CENELEC meeting on AI](#) – October 2020; [Conv2X - Health Modernization Symposium](#) – November 2020.



VACCINATION Record in EU EHR
Interoperable EHRs at user edge (InteropEHRate) Coordinated ENG - Italy
Project objective: Realise an open, standardized and unique European extended-EHR and provide European citizens with a complete view of their health history, shareable with health operators and researchers.

Smart4Health
Building today's healthier tomorrow
Citizen-centred EU-EHR exchange for personalised health (Smart4Health) - Coordinated by UNINOVA - Instituto de Desenvolvimento de Novas Tecnologias (Portugal)
Project objective: To develop, test and validate a platform prototype for the smart4health citizen-centred health record with integrated ability for data donor ship to the scientific community, enabling citizens to manage, collect, access and share own health data.

EU EHR – INTEROPARABILITY – GOVERNANCE

1. We need fit for purpose solutions
2. The co-design is build on trust – IF NOT, deployment will not be at scale!
3. The data collected need to be reliable and valid
4. And that where nurses come in as we are 24 on 24, 7 on 7 near the patient
5. Invest in nurses and nursing before digitalising the healthcare sector.

EU Health Council to implement EFN Recommendations!

ENS4Care **Smart4Health** **InteropEHRate**

<< EFN Website

To make the project visible, the EFN included a section dedicated to both projects ([InteropEHRate](#) & [Smart4Health](#)) in its Website with some key information on the projects. The homepage of the EFN [Website](#) is key in this process of dissemination. As such, whenever it is key, the EFN mentions both projects in some of the news it publishes on the homepage.

EFN Updates >>

The EFN uses its Newsletter (EFN Update) to spread information on the projects to its Members and other key EU health alliances. In 2020, the EFN mentioned both projects – InteropEHRate & Smart4Health - in its Updates of: [January-February-March 2020](#); [April-May-June 2020](#).





<< EFN Publications

In 2020, the EFN published an article mentioning the projects, in the [Nursing Special Edition \(H13\)](#) of Health Europa Quarterly Magazine, published in May 2020 - "Digitalising the Healthcare Ecosystem in the EU", where the growing need for EU-wide electronic healthcare records is highlighted; and an article in the [Health Europa Quarterly \(H14\)](#) special edition where the need for Electronic Health Records is mentioned - "Blockchain to boost continuity of care".

Next to these 2 articles, the EFN published two reports on [EFN high-level event on Digitalisation](#) in the European Parliament (February 2020) and on the ["Lessons Learned from Ebola & COVID-19"](#). In both reports, the two projects are mentioned. These two reports have been sent to EFN

Members, key EU stakeholders, European Commissioners and MEPs.

The EFN published a Press Release mentioning both projects: [High-Level meeting at the European Parliament "Digitalisation of the Healthcare Sector -End-user Co-creation"](#) (February 2020).

EFN Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (@EFNBrussels) >>

In 2020, the EFN used social media on several occasions to spread information on EHR and the 2 projects. Key words: #Digitalisation; #EHR; #enduser; #IEHR; #S4H; #Smart4HealthEU; #Interoperhate; H2020.



OPEN DEI



In 2020, both projects InteropEHRate and Smart4Health joined the [OPEN DEI initiative](#), where other EU projects are linked. DEI = Digitising European Industry.

Being a collaborative and support action which contributes to help making every industry in Europe benefit fully from digital innovations, [OPEN DEI](#) supports digital

transformation projects and stakeholders to build sovereign Data Spaces, through supporting the creation of common data platforms based on a unified architecture and an established standard in different sectors: manufacturing, agriculture, energy and healthcare, which represent key fields for the deployment of the EU strategy for digitalisation. In this framework, OPEN DEI project aims to detect gaps, encourage synergies, support regional and national cooperation, and enhance communication among the Innovation Actions implementing the EU Digital Transformation strategy. Funded by the European Union's [Horizon 2020](#) research and innovation programme under the grant agreement No. 857065, OPEN DEI Association's members include 109 companies and institutions of various industries and sizes from more than 20 countries.

III. BUILDING ALLIANCES

Building alliances and creating partnerships with key organisations to work on particular issues has been the top priority for the EFN, as this is a means of strengthening civil society in the policy-making process and to get successful outcomes not only at EU level but also at national and local levels. In 2019, the EFN continued this process of building alliances and strengthening the ones already established with the key EU non-state stakeholders built up throughout the years, which is now providing consortia for the Horizon 2020 highly respected and influential to make innovation happen and implemented.

➤ Sectorial Professions' Organisations

For the last 15 years, the EFN has been collaborating very closely with the sectorial professions' organisations based in Brussels, working on common topics, as Education (DIR55), Workforce, and Patient Safety and Quality of Care - the 3 EFN main lobby topics, and participating in the same EU projects, as: QualMent, InteropEHRate, Smart4Health, etc. In 2020, the EFN continued this good collaboration and exchange of views on key concerns, as: Education - DIR36/55, Workforce, skills, value-based health systems, Patient safety, Blockchain, Artificial intelligence, ehealth, Digitalisation, Vaccination, COVID-19, Mental health, Climate, through regular meetings with the EU Health Stakeholders as: The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union ([PGEU](#)), representing community pharmacists at EU level; The Standing Committee of European Doctors ([CPME](#)), representing the national medical associations across Europe; The Council of European Dentists ([CED](#)), representing the dentists and promoting oral health in Europe; The European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy / Physiotherapy ([ER-WCPT](#)) representing the physiotherapy profession at European Level; and the European Midwives Association ([EMA](#)), representing midwifery organisations and associations at EU level. The EFN is looking forward to continuing, in 2021, this important collaboration in the EU lobby arena, to build strong alliances to jointly push for quality of care, patient safety, and health system reform. Next to these NGO's, the EFN is in close collaboration and/or started building alliances with the following organisations:

➤ Abeocare



[ABEOCARE](#) is a Digital-health solution to support the patients and HCP ecosystem, containing three main modules: disease prevention, disease management, and overall patient management. ABEOCARE defines a new approach at the primary healthcare level, by asking the nurses or doctors to measure health parameters, biomarkers, for each specific disease that is included into the digital platform. In 2020, EFN and Abeocare were in contact in the context of Horizon Europe project development on primary care and nurse-led clinics. This is an ongoing discussion to be taken forward in 2021.

➤ Active Citizenship Network



[Active Citizenship Network](#) (ACN) is an Italian non-profit organisation founded in 1978 that aims to promote civic participation and protect citizens' rights in Italy and in Europe. Particularly active on health, with the Tribunal for Patients' Rights, education and training and European citizenship, the ACN and the EFN have been collaborating for many years, mainly in the context of EU projects (as ENS4Care), and on the [Patients' Rights Day](#), celebrated in May [every year](#), in which the EFN always participate actively, and on some topics of common interest, as: Health Reform, pain management, continuity of care, and EU enlargement. The EFN is looking forward continuing this close collaboration with ACN in 2021.

➤ European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC)



With over 400 members, [ECPC](#) is the largest European cancer patients' association. Covering all 28 Member States, and many other European and non-European countries, they represent those affected by all types of cancers, from the rarest to the most common. Cancer is getting higher in the EU's political health agenda. As such, in 2020, the EFN and ECPC were in contact in the context of the discussions on the [cancer-related comorbidities and complications initiative](#), chaired by ECPC and bringing together 20 EU level stakeholders on the joint statement "Making cancer-related complications and comorbidities an EU health priority", including EFN. The [Statement](#) that was successfully sent to Commissioners Kyriakides (Health), Gabriel (Research) and von der Leyen (EC President) calls on the EU policy makers to make cancer complications and comorbidities a priority in the [EU](#)

[Cancer Plan](#) and highlighting the effect cancer complications and comorbidities can have on a patient and their treatment. In this context, the EFN was also in contact with the [Cancer Mission Board](#) (linked to [Horizon Europe Missions](#)) to discuss the same issue of cancer comorbidities and the Cancer Mission Board, that brings together top level independent experts from research and academia, patient associations and NGOs, industry and internal agencies, from all over Europe. The EFN will continue following up this development in 2021.

➤ **European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA)**



[EFPIA](#) represents the pharmaceutical industry operating in Europe. Through its direct membership of 36 national associations and 40 leading pharmaceutical companies, EFPIA's mission is to create a collaborative environment that enables their members to innovate, discover, develop and deliver new therapies and vaccines for people across Europe, as well as contribute to the European economy. Their vision is for a healthier future for Europe; a future based on prevention, innovation, access to new treatments and better outcomes for patients. In 2020, the EFN continued its close contacts with EFPIA, namely in the context of common topics of interest as AMR, task shifting, Medical reconciliation, personalised medicines, primary care, dementia and vaccination; and try to cooperate more, namely through EU projects (IMI) and the EU Health Coalition, to influence the EU Institutions in a concrete way. The EFN will continue this close collaboration in 2021.

➤ **Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE International)**



[IHE International](#) is an initiative by healthcare professionals and industry to improve the way computer systems in healthcare share information. IHE promotes the coordinated use of established standards such as DICOM and HL7 to address specific clinical needs in support of optimal patient care. In 2020, the EFN and IHE were in contact to try to build synergies around the importance of nursing data in EHRs. The main goal was to see if IHE could assist the EFN in bringing the use of nursing data into the two EHR projects the EFN is part of, knowing that IHE is the only product in the world that fosters interoperability at the moment. The EFN will take this further in 2021.

➤ **International Association for Trusted Blockchain Applications (INATBA)**



Launched in April 2019, this [European Blockchain Partnership](#) brings together at a political level all EU Member States and members of the European Economic Area (Norway and Liechtenstein) and industry, start-ups and SMEs, policy makers, international organisations, regulators, civil society and standard setting bodies to support blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) to be mainstreamed and scaled-up across multiple sectors. The signatories of this declaration will work together towards realising the potential of blockchain-based services for the benefit of citizens, society and economy. The Healthcare working group that the EFN is following up closely aims to define stakeholders and their contributions in Healthcare technology, establish channel of communication with regulatory bodies, understand the potential of blockchain to enable and improve regulation in healthcare. The EFN is looking forward to [INATBA](#) further developments in 2020.

➤ **Knowledge4Innovation (K4I)**



[Knowledge4Innovation](#) (K4I) is an open, independent, non-profit platform with a wide variety of stakeholders including regions, cities and universities, research organisations, regions and cities, trade organisations and think tanks as well as technology platforms small and large companies. Knowledge4Innovation is advocating for favourable framework conditions promoting innovation activities in Europe. The K4I Forum is supported by more than 30 Members of the European Parliament. The EFN is putting Health higher on the innovation agenda. As such, the EFN believes that Knowledge4Innovation is a good platform for EFN to become a key player in innovation, and an ideal platform to keep health and social care high on the innovation and political agenda, making sure integrated care and continuity of care leads to better health outcomes for patients and citizens. In 2020, the EFN continued its very good collaboration, participating in some of their events providing nurses' views on innovation. The EFN will continue this good collaboration with K4I in 2021, bringing the nurses' views into the innovation debate.

➤ **ThinkYoung**



[ThinkYoung](#) is the first think tank focusing on young people, founded in 2009 in Brussels, with the aim of involving young people in the decision making processes and by providing decision makers with high-quality research on key issues affecting young people. Based on its research on young people, ThinkYoung creates schools and workshops to empower youth with the tools to make a change. In 2020, the EFN and ThinkYoung were in contact mainly in the context of the EU discussion on Vaccination and the European Commission vaccination media

campaign requested to the Coalition for Vaccination. The EFN is looking forward to continuing this good collaboration in 2021.

➤ **World Health Organisation (WHO)**



Over the last 15 years, the EFN has been engaged with WHO Europe in different ways, as: by having an observer status in WHO Regional Committee (RC) meetings, by participating in several WHO & WHO RC meetings, and by contributing to consultations/debates, to make sure that the nurses' views were taken into account in the debate. WHO EFNNMA is having an Observer status within EFN GAs. Aiming to continue and strengthen this close collaboration with WHO & WHO Forum, namely on Health systems reform, Digitalisation, Primary care, and Nursing workforce, the EFN has been looking closely at these developments and is participating in the WHO Regional Committees' meetings. Next to EFN being an official partner of the WHO European Region, the EFN Secretary General, Paul De Raeve, is part of Roster of Experts of the [WHO Digital Health Technical Advisory Group](#), a group that harnesses the power of digital health to help achieve [WHO's triple billion goals](#) as set out in our [General Programme of Work](#), and [Sustainable Development Goal 3](#): Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. The EFN is looking forward to strengthening this cooperation in 2021.

IV. NURSING NOW EUROPE

Officially launched in February 2018, [Nursing Now](#), is a programme of the [Burdett Trust for Nursing](#), aiming at improving health by raising the status and profile of nursing globally and maximise the contribution that nursing makes to Universal Health Coverage, women's empowerment and economic development. This three-year campaign, being run in collaboration with the [International Council of Nurses](#) and the [World Health Organization](#), is represented by nurses and non-nurses in active [groups](#) in over 100 countries.

Advocating that the biggest thing we can do to improve health globally is to empower nurses, representing half the health workforce of the world, its main focus points are specifically around advocating for policy changes to make sure nurses are central to achieving universal health coverage, developing primary health care, and tackling non-communicable diseases. The Campaign calls for investment in the development of nurse-led clinics; primary and community care; prevention, promotion and health literacy; midwifery, child health and adolescent services; and development of more specialist/advanced nurses inside and outside hospitals. Its activities are linked with the global health workforce strategy and the five-year Action Plan of the Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth.

The campaign strategic goal is to position nursing to optimise the potential to fully contribute and make a real difference to the health of the global population, to support nurse leaders within and across countries to translate the vision into reality, and to improve perceptions of nurses, enhance their influence and maximise their contributions to ensuring that everyone everywhere has access to health and healthcare. As such, the EFN will ensure to position nursing more central to health policy and ensure that nurses can use their skills, education and training to their full capacity.

By the end of 2020, Nursing Now Board – in which the EFN President, Elizabeth Adams, serves – will develop a challenging and ambitious agenda with the following goals to be achieved:

- ✓ Greater investment in improving education, professional development, standards, regulation and employment conditions for nurses.
- ✓ Increased and improved dissemination of effective and innovative practice in nursing.
- ✓ Greater influence for nurses and midwives on global and national health policy, as part of broader efforts to ensure health workforces are more involved in decision-making.
- ✓ More nurses in leadership positions and more opportunities for development at all levels.
- ✓ More evidence for policy and decision makers about: where nursing can have the greatest impact, what is stopping nurses from reaching their full potential and how to address these obstacles.

For nearly 50 years, the EFN has been advocating to empower nurses to improve health globally, as they are uniquely placed representing half the health workforce of the world with skills and expertise to meet the health challenges across populations. Nursing Now Campaign and EFN have a complementary and shared [agenda](#) with a focus on advocating for policy changes to ensure nurses are central to achieving universal health coverage, developing primary health care, and tackling non-communicable diseases.



Within this context, the EFN has been appointed as the [Nursing Now European regional leader](#) and at the Spring EFN General Assembly in Brussels, April 2018, the EFN Members agreed that the National Nurses Associations should become actively involved in 'Nursing Now', next to the EFN as the European lead of the Campaign.

Since its appointment, the EFN has been promoting the campaign at EU level taking the opportunity of all the different meetings the EFN has been attending and/or organised to communicate on the developments of Nursing Now Campaign. The EFN members and partners across Europe play an active role in this and are updated on regular basis (during the EFN General Assemblies, the EFN Executive Committee meetings, through the EFN Press Releases, EFN Newsletter, EU Stakeholders' meetings, etc.). The EFN relies on a database of more than 3.000 key contacts to disseminate all relevant information on the campaign and on the Nursing Now Europe activities, aiming to raise the role of nurses and the nursing profession, next to EFN [website](#), [newsletter](#), social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#)).

As since the beginning of the campaign, the [EFN Members](#) continued to be involved in the campaign by creating local/national [groups](#), and making 2020 the year of nursing, a year of change and celebration.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 hit us all very hard all over the world, and obliged us to lockdown, and to the cancellation of most of the meetings and to reduce our activities next to the EU Institutions, at least physically, as all our meetings at EU level were, from March 2020, ongoing through online platforms, except for the frontline, working in very difficult conditions to save our lives.



EFN event – 5 February 2020, European Parliament

A. Highlights

1. EFN Meetings

As in 2019, the EFN used its meetings in 2020 to inform EU stakeholders and policy makers on Nursing Now Campaign and its ongoing work, as on:

➤ EFN Event on “Digitalisation of Healthcare Ecosystem - End-user Co-Creation”

In the context of the “[Year of the Nurse and Midwife](#)”, the EFN organised on 5 February 2020 a high-level meeting at the European Parliament on digitalisation, under the scope of [Nursing Now](#) and [Knowledge4Innovation 11th Summit](#), with a special focus on the European Electronic Health Records, providing a state of art on two H2020 projects, [Smart4Health](#) and [InteropEHRate](#) developing formats for European Electronic Health Records in co-creation with the EFN, representing 3 million EU frontline nurses and end-users. This meeting was a good opportunity to present the audience what the Nursing Now campaign is doing, and to debate the health challenges we are currently facing, namely in terms of innovation. *For more information on this event, see page 17*



Worldwide Statistics



Nursing Now – Impact on Innovation

- 24 million nurses and midwives globally – half the professional health workforce
- Nursing is the largest professional group with direct contact with patients
- Enabling nurses and midwives to work to their full potential and engage as **end user co-design** - will improve access to health and deliver health policies
- Triple Impact:
 - ✓ improve health,
 - ✓ promote gender equity
 - ✓ strengthen economies

A growing global movement:
• 528 regional, national and local groups
• Over 112 countries



Europe: [www.efn.europa.eu](#) @EFNBrussels #NursingNow

Nursing Now EFN European Regional Lead

- 3 year global campaign a programme of the Burdett Trust, co-chaired by Lord Nigel Crips with a global Board and Patron Princess of Cambridge
- Vision**
- Improve health globally by raising the profile and status of nurses and midwives worldwide
 - Influencing policymakers and supporting nurses and midwives to lead, learn and build a global movement.
- Aim**
- Influence UHC, NCD and other policy
 - Promote and develop nurse and midwife leaders
 - Disseminate effective practice
 - Create, identify and share evidence of impact
 - Invest in all aspects of nursing and midwifery



@NursingNow2020 www.facebook.com/NursingNow2020
www.nursingnow.org #NursingNow

→ EFN Executive Committee meeting



The EFN Executive Committee met at the EFN Brussels Office on 6 February to discuss on the governance structure of EFN and how to move the nursing profession forward. This was a good opportunity for the EFN Secretary General & the EFN President to brief the other Executive Committee members on the ongoing work of Nursing Now Campaign.

2. Nursing Now meetings

In the last few months, the EFN participated in all the online meetings organised by Nursing Now, as:

- [Engaging with the State of the World's Nursing report](#), held on 25 March 2020, to discuss the significance of the report, how to engage with the report at country-level, and share ideas of ways to celebrate the launch and mark 7th April, World Health Day along with other Nursing Now groups and National Nursing Associations.
- [Facebook live - Q&A on the State of the World's Nursing Report with Carey McCarthy](#), on 7 April 2020, where it was expressed that we need to foster nursing leadership, as well as tackling nursing shortages. We all need a lot of investment. Strengthening the nursing workforce globally will better prepare us to face upcoming pandemics such as the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Investing in nursing education is going to help us achieve the SDGs goals. Nurses can make a maximal contribution
- [Facebook live - Nurses and midwives in the COVID19 response](#), on 7 April 2020 - In conversation with Dr. Tedros & Elizabeth Iro, on 7 April 2020, aiming to examine the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak worldwide.
- [Meeting with Nursing Now Global](#), on 8 October 2020, to discuss the possibility to have EFN in a webinar focused on leadership development focussing on early career development linked to the Nightingale Challenge initiative.
- [International Conference on History of Nursing](#)



Organised by the [Italian Nurses Association](#) and the [European Association for the History of Nursing](#), in Florence, the city where Florence Nightingale's was born, the [conference](#) gathered nurses, historians, civil and political authorities from national & EU level, to celebrate Florence Nightingale's Bicentennial discussing on the history of nursing, and highlighting current research across a wide field of endeavour. Invited as keynote speaker the EFN Secretary General [stressed](#) the "Nursing History strengthened by EU Legislation" and how still nowadays Florence Nightingale's work, as statistician and lobbyist, is

still influencing EU politics with nursing data, and how most of her legacy is what EFN is still fighting for at the EU level today. The EFN took this opportunity to raise the ongoing Nursing Now Campaign.

→ Coalition for Vaccination, European Commission

The members of the Coalition for Vaccination, committed to delivering accurate information to the public, combating myths and exchanging best practices, have [met in Brussels](#) on 9 March 2020, for the second time, to discuss present and future commitments of the Coalition as well as the media campaign that the EFN and the other Coalition co-chairs are doing in April 2020, in parallel to the European Immunization Week (EIW). The EFN took this opportunity to present its work, the 2020 WHO Year of the Nurse, the Nursing Now Campaign, and the Nightingale Challenge.



B. Communication

1. Press Releases

The EFN sends out on regular basis to all its network Press Releases as EFN and as European lead for Nursing Now Campaign. In 2020, due to COVID-19 and the reduced activities at EU level, the EFN sent out a Press Release on [High-Level meeting at the European Parliament "Digitalisation of the Healthcare Sector - End-user Co-creation"](#), 5 February 2020, mentioning Nursing Now. All the EFN Press Releases are available on [EFN Website](#).

2. EFN Updates



The EFN Updates, making reference to key information for the nurses and the nursing profession within the European Union, being sent to the EFN Members and network at EU level, are a good tool to keep the EFN Members and other key EU health alliances informed on the EFN policies, actions and relevant initiatives, including the Nursing Now Campaign. In 2020, the EFN mentioned the nursing now campaign in its EFN Updates: [January-February-March-2020](#); [April-May-June 2020](#); [July-August-September 2020](#).

3. EFN Website

Being used as key communication channel to disseminate information to the EFN members, the EU health stakeholders, EU decision-makers, and the public in general, the EFN uses this [channel](#) to communicate on the Nursing Now key information at EU level - through its [homepage](#), and dedicated section for [Nursing Now 'Europe'](#).



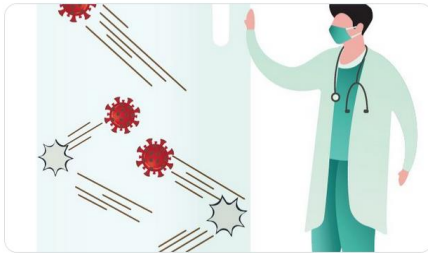
4. EFN Social Media

All over the year the EFN took as many opportunities as possible on its Social Media network (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn - @EFNBrussels) to mention Nursing Now or Hashtag it - Key words used: #NursingNow #Nurses2020 #NursingNowEurope.

➤ 11 May 2020 - #RememberHealthHeroes

As an example, as encouraged by Nursing Now, ICN and WHO, the EFN made a small Social Media campaign in memory of nurses and health workers who had tragically died during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, on 11 May 2020, eve of the International Nurses Day. It was indeed important for the EFN, on behalf of all its members, to show its support to all the nurses in these very difficult times, by participating in this moment of reflection and share some key messages on its Social Media (Key hashtags used: #RememberHealthHeroes #IND2020 #nurses2020 #COVID19 #heroes #healthcare @EFNBrussels)

EFN @EFNBrussels · May 11
#Nurses, the #heroes at the #frontline of #healthcare. Read EFN article here: bit.ly/3fC65if
#RememberHealthHeroes #IND2020 #nurses2020 @EFNBrussels



EFN @EFNBrussels · May 11
Today, on the eve of the International Nurses Day, we remember all those nurses who have lost their lives to COVID-19 while in service. #RememberHealthHeroes #IND2020 #nurses2020 @EFNBrussels



EFN @EFNBrussels · May 11
#Covid19 has shown that Europe's #healthcaresystems need to be strengthened to be better prepared to future possible scenarios such as the current pandemic. #RememberHealthHeroes #IND2020 #nurses2020 @EFNBrussels



EFN @EFNBrussels · May 11
It is estimated that more than 1,000 #healthcare #professionals throughout the world have lost their lives due to #COVID19. Today, we honour the memory of all those #nurses and other healthcare professionals who died to save us. #RememberHealthHeroes #IND2020 #nurses2020



➤ Some other examples of posts that mention #NursingNow:

European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
15 February · 13
After the high-level event, participants continued debating on #cocreation, #digitalisation, #healthcare #innovation, the year of #nurses to celebrate the bicentennial of Florence Nightingale birth, #NursingNow, and EFN priorities, during a dinner at the @EuropeanParliament #nurses #endusers #SmartHealthEU #interoperability #nurses2020 @EFNBrussels



European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
9 May · 13
#EuropeDay makes #nurses and #citizens realise the importance of health policy and health research #nurses building the European Health Union, #Covid19 shows the need for it! #EuropeanAgendaCovid19 #nurses2020 #NursingNow2020 @EFNBrussels #nursingnow #supportnursesandmidwives



European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
17 July · 13
A healthy world in which no one is left behind is only possible if we invest in a #HealthyRecovery. A #HealthyRecovery is only possible if we invest in health and the health workforce #UHC, #nurses2020 #NursingNow #NursingNowEU @EFNBrussels



European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
10 October at 10:35 · 13
World Mental Health Day - 10/10/2020 - EFN reminds all EU stakeholders and EU officials that since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, NOW 18 months ago, the frontline nurses have been greatly exposed to unprecedented situations, a lot of pressure and responsibility towards the decisions they had to make (which were often taken in insufficiently funded and ill healthcare ecosystems). Altogether, these have taken a toll on the mental health of nurses and Commissioners TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION to protect frontline nurses. #mentalhealth #nurses2020 #EuropeanCommission #NursingNow



European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
24 September · 13
The EFN joins a virtual event, co-organized with the European Commission, as panelist to share views on the role of nurses promoting healthy lifestyles. #nurses #nurses2020 #nursesonlinein #efn #nursingnow #Europeancommission #Europeanparliament #publichealthmatters



European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
6 October at 10:33 · 13
#Healthcare Professionals Workforce across the European Union ready to foster #Vaccination among citizens. #CoalitionforVaccination #nurses2020 #NursingNow #nurses #EFN #PublicHealthEducation #Nursing #PublicHealthMatters #EuropeanParliament #EuropeanCommission #EU_Health



European Federation of Nurses Associations - EFN
14 October at 18:30 · 13
#EFNMembers provided valuable information on the #COVID19 crisis management at national level & the importance for any #nurse to be better prepared, protected & supported for any #Covid19crisis #Covid19pandemic #Covid19awareness #NursingNow #NursingNowEU @EFNBrussels



V. A FUTURE FOR EVIDENCE BASE POLICYMAKING

A. EUROPEAN NURSING RESEARCH FOUNDATION



Founded by the EFN in 2013, within the context of the increasing emphasis placed on nursing research at EU level to secure reliable evidence from which to base future workforce decisions, the European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF) is aiming at making the bridge between evidence and policy-making process and act as a contact point for EU policy-makers and politicians, and analysing and compiling what already exists in terms of nursing research in the EU Member States, in order to convert existing data into evidence-based advocacy for the EU policy-making process.

↳ ENRF Governance body

In terms of governance, all EFN Members are entitled to nominate and elect four Directors, of which one is the Founding Director, representing the EFN voice. The ENRF [governance body](#) is composed by four Directors and the ENRF Secretary General, Paul De Raeve. The ENRF Board of Directors (BoD) is responsible for defining the ENRF priorities and outcomes in accordance with the ENRF mission, vision and constitutional aims, included in the [ENRF strategic plan \(2017-2020\)](#) that contains a set of values, content and theme for the Foundation to work on.

→ Elections 2020

Taking into account that the previous BoD 2-year mandate (2017-2019) was coming to an end, elections took place on 15 and 16 January 2020, online, through EFN Website, for a new Board of Directors. The new elected Board for a two-years term (2020-2022) are: 1 Founding EFN Director: Dame Anne Marie Rafferty, Royal College of Nursing (UK), appointed ENRF President; and 2 Directors: Izabella Uchmanowicz, Wroclaw Medical University (Poland), ENRF Vice-President; and Andreas Xyrichis, King's College London (UK), ENRF Treasurer.



↳ ENRF activities

In 2020, taking into account COVID-19 pandemic, the ENRF activities had to be reduced, . even though, the new elected BoD took forward some work, through online meetings and emails, namely the recommendations of the EFN Members, as approved in October 2019, in Greece. As this is an ongoing development, this work will be further developed in 2021. As recommended by the EFN Working Group on the Future of ENRF, and approved by the EFN Members at the EFN October General Assembly, in Greece, and in the context of rethinking the future of the Foundation, the ENRF Office kept its activities to the minimum level of legal requirements, and to the minimum level expected by the European Commission, to not limit or harm potential future activities, until the EFN General Assembly goes through an evaluation of the outcomes reached by the Foundation in 2-years' time. Which meant for the ENRF Office in 2020: the circulation of only two Newsletters over the year, less Briefing Notes, attending less meetings, less Social Media, etc. But keeping always the EFN Members and the ENRF Reference Points informed on the key topics for nursing research ongoing discussions at central moments.

i. Board of Directors meetings

In 2020, the ENRF Board of Directors met on:

- **5 March (Online)** to discuss the ENRF activities and developments to be taken further over the year, including: to work on the ENRF constitutional changes, as agreed by the EFN Members at the EFN October 2019 General Assembly in Greece, to reflect on the ENRF function and values to agree a common purpose and work in a positive climate to achieve concrete results, develop a first Policy Brief on 'Missed Nursing Care' to be presented to the EFN September EXCOM & to the October 2020 EFN General Assembly. They discussed and endorsed the ENRF budget Plan 2020 and elected the ENRF President (Dame Anne Marie Rafferty), Vice-President (Izabella Uchmanowicz), and Treasurer (Andreas Xyrichis).
- **7 September (Online)** where the ENRF Directors discussed the ongoing work as approved at the previous BoD meeting (5 March). The ENRF President explained that due to COVID-19 all the developments foreseen were stopped.

The BoD agreed on concrete deadlines to provide the approved deliverables that will be discussed and approved at the next ENRF BoD in February 2021.

ii. EFN Executive Committees & General Assemblies

As done since its establishment, the EFN Executive Committee and General Assembly were, in 2020, continuously informed on the ENRF ongoing work, and the ENRF Directors' reflections reported to, and discussed at the EFN Executive Committee meetings and General Assemblies.

iii. Building Alliances

Building alliances and creating partnerships, next to strengthening the ones already established with key EU stakeholders and EU policy decision-makers is key for an organisation to grow and to achieve concrete outcomes. Contributing to an efficient information flow, the ENRF participated in 2020 in some key EU meetings and looked to build reliable alliances with key EU health and social Stakeholders, and policy and decision-makers, to ensure that nursing research get higher on the EU Research and Innovation Agenda. The ENRF Office will continue this important alliance building in 2021.

iv. EU Consultations

Answering European Commission consultations is a great opportunity to increase the ENRF visibility and making sure the nursing researchers' voice is heard at political level. As such, the ENRF always provides [input](#) to the European Commission consultations when seen relevant. Unfortunately, in 2020 due to the sanitary crisis, no major EU consultations were made available for the ENRF to provide input.

v. Communication

Crucial to get the message across and to enhance effectiveness, communicating on the ENRF activities is crucial for making it visualised, and to get the message across. As such, in 2020, the ENRF Board of Directors & Reference Points, as well as the EFN members, received on regular basis the ENRF Newsletter, and ENRF Briefing Notes.

- » **ENRF Newsletters** - In 2020, the ENRF Office published only 2 Newsletters: [May](#) and [December](#). As Founding organisation, the EFN takes the opportunity to mention the ENRF in its Newsletter when it is seen relevant. All ENRF Newsletters are available at: <http://www.enrf.eu/dissemination/newsletter/>
- » **Briefing notes** - Seen as a way to provide information on key meetings and latest developments at EU level to the ENRF Board of Directors, Reference points, and EFN Members, the ENRF Office published in 2020 several key Briefing Notes: [Horizon 2020 a European Country Analysis](#) (January 2020); [Health Programme 2014–2020, The Budget's Allocation for 2020](#) (February 2020); [EU's Health Budget and European Health Data Space](#) (May 2020); [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus](#) (May 2020); [Co-creation & Co-design with the end-users – Real time data for the European Health Data Space](#) (July 2020); [Bridging the Implementation Gap Between Nursing Research, the General Data Protection Regulation, and Artificial Intelligence](#) (September 2020); [European Research & Innovation Days 2020](#) (September 2020); [The role of NCPs in Horizon Europe](#) (November 2020); [The Future of Research and Innovation Funds in the EU](#) (November 2020); □ [How to get prepared for Horizon Europe!](#) (December 2020). All ENRF Briefing Notes are available at: <http://www.enrf.eu/briefing-notes/>
- » **ENRF Web & Social Media** – Updated on regular basis with key information/news, the ENRF Website (www.enrf.eu), is aiming at making the Foundation more visible, next to ENRF Facebook (@enrf.foundation) & Twitter (@Enrf_Foundation).

➡ Conclusion

The ENRF has the ambition to become a reference point for the dialogue between nursing researchers and EU policymakers, with the purpose of translating knowledge into health and social policies with the ultimate objective to improve our knowledge base when reforming national health and social care ecosystems, and to become the scientific reference point for nursing research to enhance the EU health and social policy agenda. The ENRF Directors, together with the ENRF Secretary General, will continue to develop the Foundation further, taking into account the Working Group recommendations on the Future of the ENRF, the EFN Executive Committee position and the decision taken by the EFN members at the EFN General Assembly, October 2019, which the new Board of Directors started already to put in place.

VI. EFN DATA COLLECTION

To gather quantity and quality evidence, the EFN uses data collection (through email, online surveys, or during the EFN General Assemblies with the Tour de Table item) as key component in its daily lobby work. This allows to provide the EU institutions and key EU stakeholders with up-to-date information/data to take informed decisions and consider the next steps on crucial topics. As such, in 2020, the EFN and its members undertook and provided input to some key surveys/consultations:

A. EFN

COVID-19 impact on nurses' health & wellbeing - Biological Agent Directive 2020/739

The idea behind this data collection and analysis came from the EFN's Executive Committee, in September 2020, who decided to look further into the working conditions of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic and the legislative changes affecting them. The EFN Members provided useful information. The EFN Report compiling the outcomes of this survey will help to compare the situation between countries, related to: 1/ question 1 - the situation is that in most countries COVID-19 is recognised as an occupational acquired injury. However, this is not the case in all countries, hence resulting in a worrying situation; 2/ question 2 - in most countries' healthcare professionals exposed to COVID-19 do not have any legal compensations; 3/ question 3 - in most countries, there is no Government compensation to healthcare professionals exposed to or infected by COVID-19 in the workplace. Again, this results in a worrying situation for nurses, being the largest group of healthcare professionals, as this may result in a career-ending for some *nurses*. *For more information on this report, see page 20.*

COVID-19 crisis management at national level

Taking into account the COVID-19 outbreak ongoing all over the world, the EFN members were requested, at the occasion of the online EFN General Assembly, in October 2020, to provide information on the COVID-19 crisis management at national level. Useful information was provided to the Brussels Office, and collected into a report, which has been extremely important for the EFN to lobby the EU institutions, and in particular the European Commission (DG ECHO, DG Sante, DG GROW), to make sure nurses are better prepared, protected and supported for the next outbreak or health crisis in the EU. *For more information on this report, see page 21.*

B. EFN Members

Funding for nursing internships

Following the transition from European Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) N°1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System (Dir 2013/55/EU) to Belgian law, the training of nurses responsible for general care in Belgium has been extended from 3 years to 4 years. Within the Flemish Community, the possibility to "reimburse" the traineeships of the 4th year is being considered. As part of this discussion, the EFN Member - AUVB (Belgium) - conducted a survey next to the EFN members on the organisation of the nursing training in their own country and the possible financial reimbursement of the nursing traineeships the students undertake during their training.

Intensive care for preterm infants

In the context of the German reform of nursing education and the major debate about qualification requirements for nurses who want to work in intensive care units for preterm infants, the EFN Member – German Nurses Association (DBfK), conducted a survey next to the other EFN Members to understand what the requirements (for general paediatric intensive care units and intensive care units for adults) in other countries are for nurses who - after being educated as general nurse - want to work in intensive care wards for preterm infants. The situation in Germany until now is that it is required to be educated as a paediatric nurse and 50% of staff of a unit have to be specialized intensive care nurses. As we are now moving away from three branches of nurses (including direct entry paediatric nurses with 3 years education)

towards one type of general nurse it is being discussed whether nurses who want to work with preterm infants in intensive care need specialisation as a paediatric nurse in addition to being educated as a general nurse.

Clinical Training of undergraduate nursing students

In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, the Portuguese regulatory body – Ordem dos Enfermeiros – collected information from the other EFN Members on whether their country health institutions were refusing the continuity of undergraduate nursing students in regard to their Clinical Training due to COVID-19, or not. The main results of this survey show that most of the health care institutions do not refuse to continue the clinical training, although there have been some adaptations to make it possible in some particular contexts.

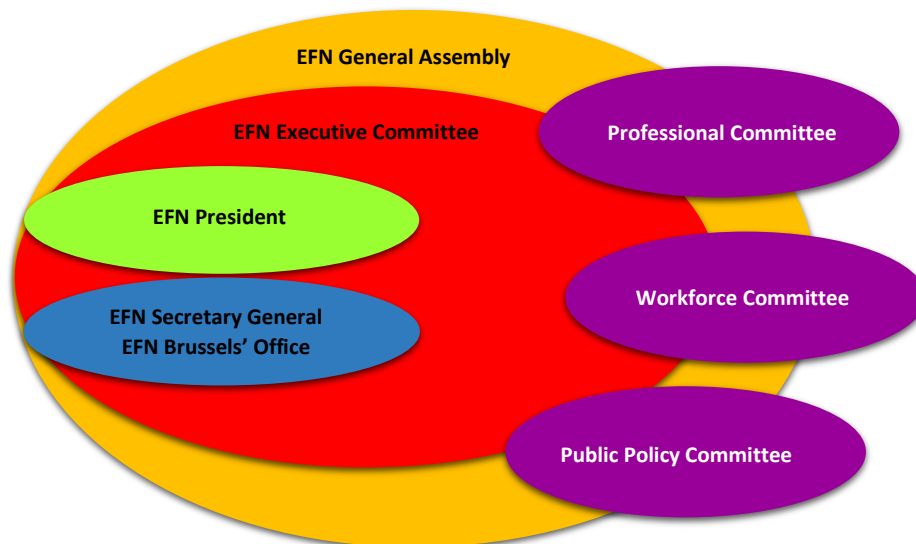
Nurses Infected/Died - COVID-19 - Europe

In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, the Spanish Council of Nurses, collected information from the other EFN Members on the number of nurses infected by COVID-19 and of nurses that have died from COVID-19, at the European level. *For more information on this report, see page 23.*

VII. EFN GOVERNANCE

A. EFN STRUCTURE

The EFN governance structure consists of the General Assembly, which includes 36 National Nurses' Associations, supported by the Executive Committee, the Professional, Workforce and Public Policy Committees, and the EFN Brussels Office.



B. EFN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As the EFN governing body, the General Assembly meets twice a year to discuss the important issues related to the EFN lobby work that can influence the nurses and the nursing profession at EU and national levels, to discuss and endorse key Policy and Position Statements, and to work on several EU projects.

The EFN General Assembly is constituted by:

- ↳ **Members** - drawn from the [National Nurses' Associations](#) from the twenty-eight EU Member States + Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, AUVB-UGIB from Belgium.
- ↳ **Observers** - International Council of Nurses ([ICN](#)); World Health Organisation ([WHO](#)); and the European Nursing Students Association (ENSA).

To view the full list of the EFN Members, updated on regular basis, please visit the [EFN Website](#).

In 2020, due to COVID-19, the EFN had to cancel its Spring General Assembly due to take place on 11-12 April, in Brussels, and had to reorganise its Autumn General Assembly, due to take place on 15-16 October in Estonia, as an online meeting only on 15 October, with a reduced agenda. The minutes of the General Assemblies are not publicly available. The EFN Members can access them via the Members' section of EFN [Website](#). In 2021, the EFN General Assembly will meet on 15-16 April (Portugal – If COVID-19 allows us. If not, then it will be again done online) and 14-15 October (Brussels).

C. EFN COMMITTEES

Constituted in 2006, in order to prepare and facilitate the EFN lobby process towards the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers (EU Presidency), the three EFN Committees meet twice a year during the EFN General Assemblies in order to discuss and produce recommendations to the General Assembly on the steps forward to achieve concrete outcomes related to specific issues. In 2020, due to COVID-19 and the cancellation of the April GA and the October GA being organised online, the 3 Committees could not meet as done usually. Instead, the 3 Committees' leads

made sure that the most important EFN Policy Statements (ONE per Committee) were discussed, amended/approved in plenary (online), next to the EFN new SOLP 2021-2027, to allow the EFN Office to take its lobby work further

- **Professional Committee:** In 2020, the Professional Committee led by Nina Hahtela, from the Finnish Nurses Association, discussed and the EFN Policy Statement on Nurses' Mentorship. The EFN Members provided amendments to the policy statement but did not approve it as presented, requesting to bring the final amended version to the April 2021 EFN General Assembly, for final discussion/amendments/approval.
- **Workforce Committee:** In 2020, the Workforce Committee led by Aristides Chorattas, from Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association, discussed and approved the EFN Policy Statement on the Consequences of Nurses' Shortages in Public Health with some amendments.
- **Public Policy Committee:** In 2020, the Public Policy Committee led by Jana Gelatiková, from Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives, discussed and approved the EFN Policy Statement on the Nurses Contribution to Tackle Climate Change with minor amendments.

D. EFN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The [EFN Executive Committee](#) is constituted by seven members: President, Vice-president, Treasurer and four delegates elected by the EFN Members National Nurses' Associations. They meet at least twice a year (in between each General Assembly) to discuss key issues for the EFN, to prepare recommendations for the General Assembly, and to follow-up on the General Assembly decisions. An extraordinary Executive Committee meeting usually takes place the day before each General Assembly to set up the last recommendations for the meeting.

a. Meetings

In 2020, the EFN Executive Committee met several times: on 6 February (Brussels) and 4 September (Online) for their regular meetings, and on 2 April, 5 June, 22 June, 30 October (all Online) for the EFN Executive Committee extraordinary meetings. In 2021, the Executive Committee will meet for their regular meetings on: 5 February and 3 September (Online).

b. Elections

As the EFN members did not meet face-to-face in October 2020, due to COVID-19, the EFN Executive Committee elections took place on 12-13 October 2020, online, through the EFN Website (same procedure as for the ENRF Board Elections). As a result of this online election that went very smoothly, the EFN members elected by majority the following members of the EFN Executive Committee: Vice-President: Nina Hahtela (Finnish Nurses Association, Finland) (47 votes in favour); and 2 Members of the Executive Committee: Aristides Chorattas (Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association, Cyprus) (re-elected) (41 votes in favour); Monika Ažman (Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, Slovenia) (New) (41 votes in favour) for a two-year term 2020-2022. As a result, the new Executive Committee is constituted as follow:



President: Ms Elizabeth Adams, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, *Ireland*



Vice-President: Ms Nina Hahtela, Finnish Nurses Association, *Finland*



Treasurer: Mr Yves Mengal, Fédération Nationale des Infirmières de Belgique (FNIB), *Belgium*

Four Executive Committee Members:



Mr Aristides Chorattas, Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association, *Cyprus*



Ms Philomena Ni Sheaghdha, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, *Ireland*



Ms Monika Azman, Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia, *Slovenia*



Dame Donna Kinnair, Royal College of Nursing, *United Kingdom*

E. EFN BRUSSELS OFFICE

In 2020, the EFN Brussels Office, consisting of the Secretary General, the Secretary, and the Policy Advisor, supported by consultants in the area of Accounting, Social Security System, Web and IT management, Legal Affairs and on specific policy areas, especially during the EFN General Assemblies, continued focussing on implementing the EFN Strategic Lobby Plan 2014-2020, next to developing a new one for the upcoming 7 years (2021-2027).

Having a proactive approach to setting the EU health and social policy agenda by influencing the major policy initiatives from the European Institutions, which in turn impacts on nurses and the nursing profession, is the core business of EFN. Translating this political journey into the 'language' of the EFN members, through the EFN Updates, Press Releases and Briefing Notes, bridges the distance between Brussels and the governmental capital of the Member States where national policies are developed. Informing and keeping the EFN members up to speed is essential in putting them in an advanced position vis-à-vis their national governments. But equally important is the engagement of the EFN members in the Brussels' lobbying process 'to put a human face to policy-making'.

As such, having an EFN Office in Brussels equipped with highly educated and motivated staff, and empowering members to exchange views on specific EU policy areas, thus enabling them to go back home with the capacity to influence national governments is, in fact, the 'raison d'être' of EFN.

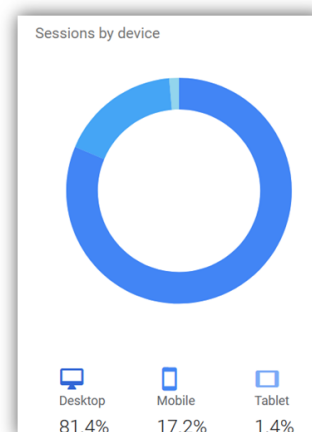
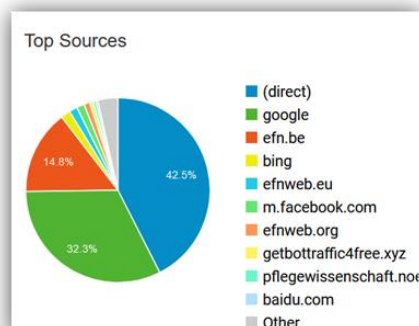
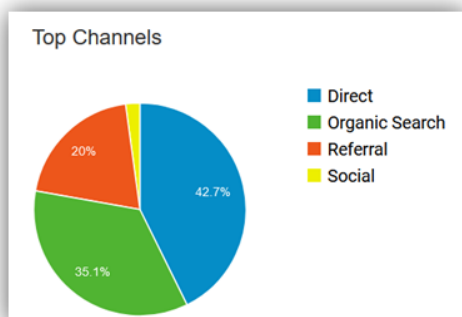
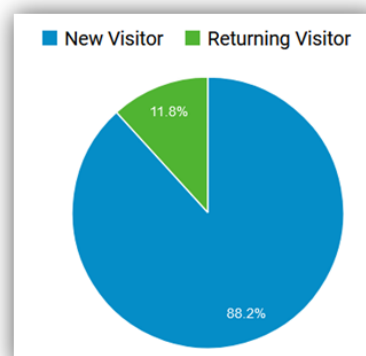
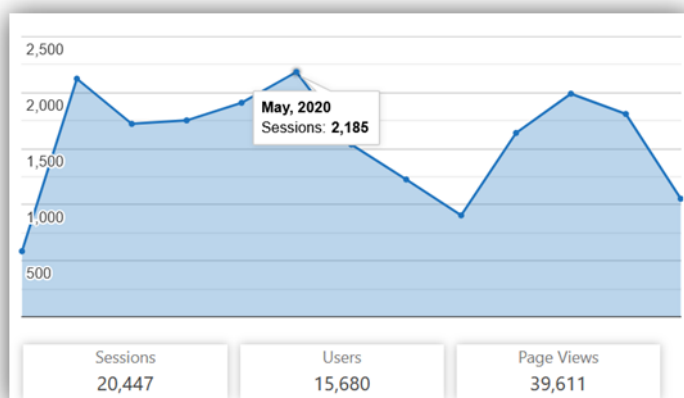
VIII. COMMUNICATION

For the EFN, it is essential that its members have the necessary information, knowledge and experience to take informed decisions on the key issues related to the nursing profession, not only during the EFN General Assemblies, but also when an item is being discussed and/or needs urgent attention, decision and/or action. In order to be as reactive and proactive as possible, the EFN Brussels Office regularly provides the EFN members with up-to-date information on the most recent items discussed at EU level, through updates, briefing notes, press releases, position statements, and articles. Most of these documents are made available to the public via the EFN Website: www.efnweb.eu.

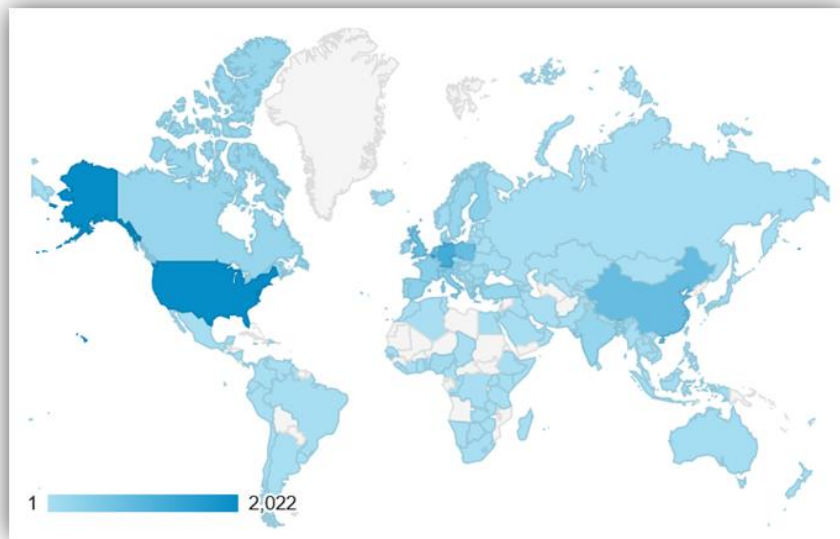
EFN Website

The [EFN website](http://www.efnweb.eu) is used as a key communication channel to disseminate information to the EFN members, the EU health stakeholders, key decision-makers, and the public in general. Updated on regular basis, the EFN Website reflects the EFN on-going activities and relevant information which shows the dynamics and impact of EFN on EU policymaking. Below you can see how much people use the EFN Website and which pages they read the most, with some statistics on the EFN Website number of visitors and top pages/documents visited in the last year (*data as of December 2020*):

► Number of visits to EFN Website (for the full year)



Visits by country



Number of visits country by country

✂ EFN Members

Albania	58	Austria	416	Belgium	956	Bulgaria	150
Croatia	124	Cyprus	67	Czech Republic	173	Denmark	106
Estonia	80	Finland	373	France	379	North Macedonia	17
Germany	1,265	Greece	258	Hungary	43	Iceland	23
Ireland	218	Italy	462	Latvia	33	Lithuania	46
Luxembourg	104	Malta	28	Montenegro	18	Netherlands	738
Norway	109	Poland	831	Portugal	227	Romania	111
Serbia	50	Slovak Republic	149	Slovenia	196	Spain	372
Sweden	222	Switzerland	215	United-Kingdom	758		

✂ Other countries

Algeria	6	Andorra	1	Argentina	12	Armenia	1
Australia	60	Azerbaijan	3	Bahrain	1	Bangladesh	7
Belarus	4	Benin	3	Bosnia & Herzegovina	36	Botswana	2
Brazil	24	Cambodia	3	Cameroon	5	Canada	223
Chile	2	China	834	Colombia	12	Congo	4
Côte d'Ivoire	8	Ecuador	3	El Salvador	4	Egypt	24
Ethiopia	2	Faroe Island	1	Georgia	8	Ghana	25
Gibraltar	3	Hong Kong	42	India	242	Indonesia	50
Iran	19	Iraq	6	Israel	33	Jamaica	5
Japan	77	Jordan	3	Kazakhstan	8	Kyrgyzstan	2
Kenya	12	Kosovo	27	Kuwait	2	Laos	2

Lebanon	11	Madagascar	1	Malaysia	8	Mali	
Mauritius	1	Mexico	35	Moldova	8	Mongolia	6
Morocco	15	Myanmar	8	Namibia	2	Nepal	2
New Zealand	6	Nicaragua	1	Nigeria	91	Oman	11
Pakistan	24	Palestine	3	Panama	2	Peru	13
Philippines	54	Puerto Rico		Qatar	8	Reunion	2
Russia	20	Saudi Arabia	27	Senegal	4	Sierra Leone	2
Singapore	13	Somalia	2	South Africa	16	South Korea	99
Sri Lanka	9	Taiwan	28	Tanzania	5	Thailand	30
Togo	11	Turkey	208	Tunisia	3	Trinidad & Tobago	6
Uganda	7	Ukraine	61	United Arab Emirates	31	United States	2,022
Uzbekistan	2	Venezuela	4	Vietnam	21	Zambia	1

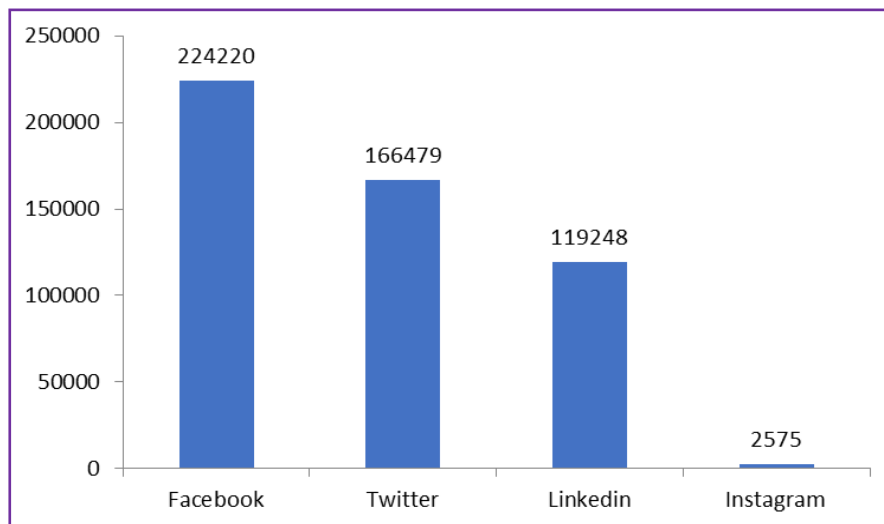
➤ **Top pages viewed (for the full year)**

1. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations European Federation of Nurses Associations	12,865 (33.43%)	21. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Position Statements	221 (0.57%)
2. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Members	1,412 (3.67%)	22. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Press Releases	220 (0.57%)
3. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations EFN Members' Section	1,367 (3.55%)	23. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations ENS4Care	219 (0.57%)
4. AGENDA EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations	1,123 (2.92%)	24. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Links	210 (0.55%)
5. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations History	1,112 (2.89%)	25. State of the World's Nursing 2020 Report Just Published! EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations	208 (0.54%)
6. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Browsing the category Latest News	989 (2.57%)	26. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations EU Vaccination Campaign	206 (0.54%)
7. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Mission & Objectives	984 (2.56%)	27. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Input to EU Institutions	201 (0.52%)
8. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Executive Committee	900 (2.34%)	28. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Quality Mentorship for Developing Competent Nursing Students (QualMent)	194 (0.50%)
9. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations EFN Competency Framework for Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC, amended by Directive 2013/55/EU	893 (2.32%)	29. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations ENS4Care Partners	193 (0.50%)
10. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Search Results	887 (2.31%)	30. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Activity Reports	188 (0.49%)
11. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Brussels office	759 (1.97%)	31. EFN - Europejska Federacja Stowarzyszeń Pielęgniarek Europejska Federacja Stowarzyszeń Pielęgniarek	184 (0.48%)
12. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Contact Us	759 (1.97%)	32. Healthcare professionals urge authorities to guarantee protection to those in front lines against Covid-19 EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations	184 (0.48%)
13. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations NURSING NOW EUROPE	355 (0.92%)	33. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Statutes – Constitution	173 (0.45%)
14. (not set)	330 (0.86%)	34. EFN receives the European Women's Prize EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations	170 (0.44%)
15. EFN – EFCNa – EuSEN Joint Statement on COVID-19 Preparedness and the Urgent Need to Protect Frontline Nurses EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations	311 (0.81%)	35. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations EFN Workforce Matrix 3+1	164 (0.43%)
16. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations EFN Executive Committee Elections – 12-13 October 2020 Welcome	281 (0.73%)	36. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations EFN Books	151 (0.39%)
17. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Articles	273 (0.71%)	37. Nurses and COVID-19 EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations	147 (0.38%)
18. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations Smart4Health – Citizen-Centred EU-EHR Exchange for Personalised Health	256 (0.67%)	38. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations EFN Meetings' Documents	145 (0.38%)
19. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations	222 (0.58%)	39. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations InteropEHRate	145 (0.38%)
20. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations EFN Reports	221 (0.57%)	40. EFN – European Federation of Nurses Associations ENRF Directors' Election – January 2020	142 (0.37%)

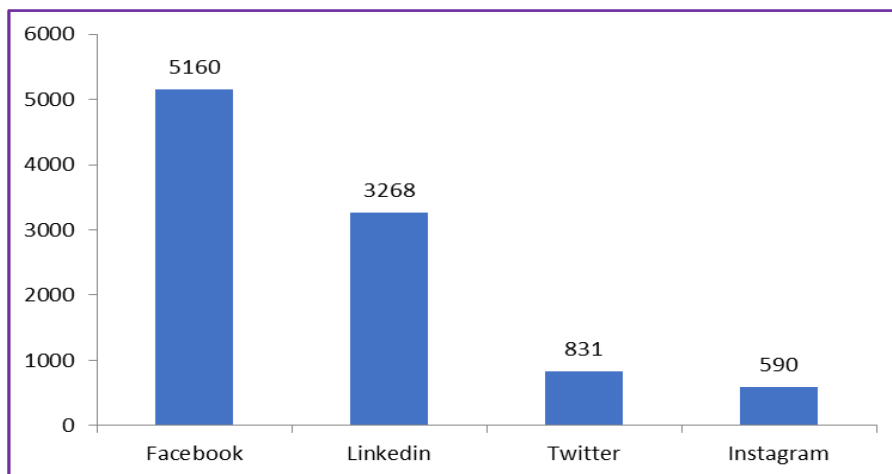
➤ Social Media (SM)

Social media is nowadays an important tool to share and exchange information with the EU lobby arena. In order to be more visible in the social media network and to get EFN messages closer to the European stakeholders, the MEPs and Commission people who use social media to communicate, and the nurses all over the EU, the EFN is using [Facebook](#); [Twitter](#); and [Instagram](#). Overall, we can say that in 2020, EFN posts reached 512.522 people from all over the world, with a top of 22.4220 people on Facebook and 166.479 on Twitter; and 10.000 people interacted or reacted to it, with a top of 5.160 reactions on Facebook ([See here the EFN Social Media Summary report for 2020](#)). See below for more details.

How many people visualised EFN Social Media posts?

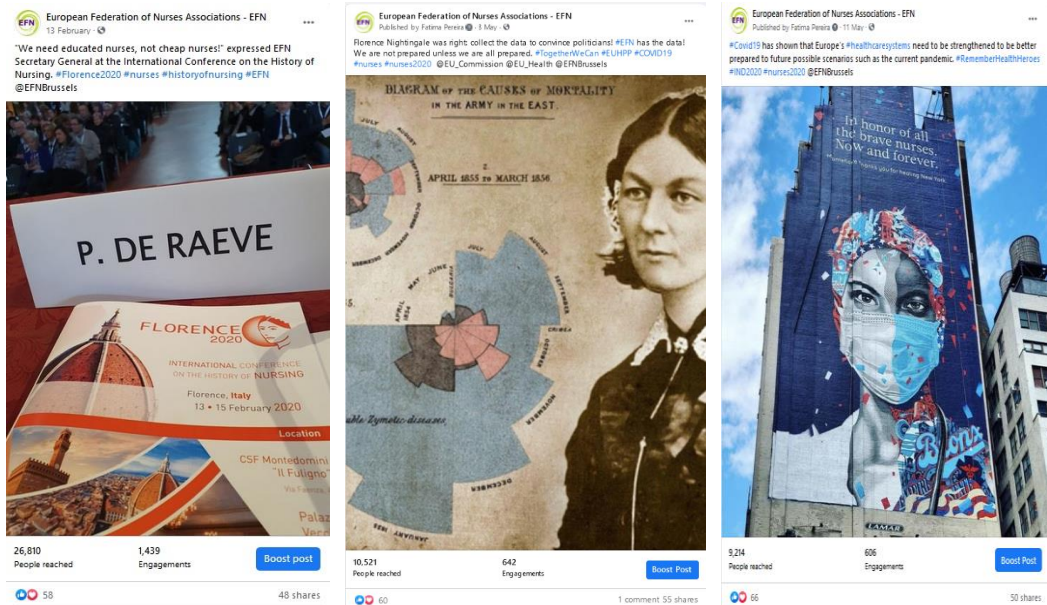


How many people interacted with your posts?



📌 EFN Facebook: /efnbrussels

The EFN Facebook account has currently 2315 followers. In 2020, the EFN was quite active on Facebook, with many posts published, and an average of around 1000 people seeing them, with a top reached with the one published on the occasion of the International Conference on the History of Nursing (Florence), on 13 February, seen by 26.810 people, followed by the one on Florence Nightingale, on 8 May, seen by 10.521 people, and by the one on COVID-19, on 11 May, seen by 9.214 people.



EFN Twitter: @EFNBussels

The EFN Twitter account has currently 702 followers. In 2020, the EFN was quite active on Twitter, namely raising awareness on the nursing profession with key messages, as on the occasion of patients' day, International nurses' day, immunisation week, on mental health, on vaccination and the role of nurses, EFN main activities (as high-level meetings, publications, etc.) and/or key topics for the nurses. The top tweet of 2020, is the one published on the occasion of EFN receiving the 2020 Women of Europe Award, on 2 December 2020, seen by 9.578 people, followed by the one published on the meeting of the coalition for vaccination, on 9 March 2020, seen by 4.955 people.



EFN Instagram: @efn_brussels

As for Facebook & Twitter, the EFN is using Instagram to publish the most relevant information. The EFN Instagram account has currently 62 followers. In 2020, the EFN was quite active also on Instagram, namely raising awareness on the nursing profession with key messages, as on the occasion of patients' day, International nurses' day, immunisation week, on mental health, on vaccination and the role of nurses, on meetings the EFN participated in and/or key topics for the nurses. The top post of 2020, is the one published on the occasion of EFN receiving the 2020 Women of Europe Award, on 2 December 2020, seen by 312 people, followed by another one on the same day seen by 195 people.



Aimé par leadersepra et d'autres personnes
efn_brussels Elizabeth Adams expressed "This is a great surprise, and our nurses are so honored to receive this prestigious award. With so little real recognition for their commitment and bravery this is so valued, cherished and celebrated award for all our nurses and their families." #WomenofEurope #europeancommission #nursingnow



Aimé par annkristinroteg et d'autres personnes
efn_brussels The fifth anniversary of the Women of Europe Award, jointly organised by the European Movement International (EMI) and the European Women's Lobby (EWL), are giving EFN this prestigious prize. #WomenofEurope #europeancommission #nursingnow #europeanparliament #Europarl_EN #nurses2020 #nurses #eucommission #efn #oecd

EFN Social Media Reports

You can have a detailed overview of **EFN Social Media posts** by theme, done over 2020, through the small reports developed for each of them:

- ✓ [Digital Health](#) (February 2020)
- ✓ [European Patients' Rights Day 2020](#) (April 2020)
- ✓ [Immunisation Week 2020](#) (April & October 2020)
- ✓ [Europe Day 2020](#) (May 2020)
- ✓ [International Nurses Day 2020](#) (May 2020)
- ✓ [Mental Health](#) (May 2020)
- ✓ [Climate change](#) (September 2020)
- ✓ [Nordic Nurses Federation 100th Anniversary](#) (September 2020)
- ✓ [World Patient Safety Day 2020](#) (September 2020)
- ✓ [Public Health Education](#) (September 2020)
- ✓ [Artificial Intelligence for Health](#) (October 2020)
- ✓ [World Mental Health Day](#) (October 2020)
- ✓ [AMR](#) (November 2020)
- ✓ [Meeting with Commissioner Schmit](#) (November 2020)
- ✓ [2020 Women of Europe Award](#) (December 2020)
- ✓ [EHR EU Projects](#) (All over the year)
- ✓ [COVID-19](#) (All over the year)



EFN Update

On a regular basis, when significant lobby information is available, the EFN publishes its [Update](#), a newsletter that makes reference to the main information for nurses and the nursing profession within the European Union and to the key issues to influence the European Institutions. These 'Updates' keep the EFN Members and other key EU health alliances informed about the EFN policies, actions and relevant EU initiatives. In 2019, the EFN published 4 Updates: [January-February-March 2020](#); [April-May-June 2020](#); [July-August-September 2020](#); [October-November-December 2020](#). All the EFN Updates are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=875

■ EFN Press Releases

Another approach that the EFN is using to communicate with the EU lobby arena is through its press releases. The [EFN Press Releases](#) provide the EFN members and other key EU health actors, with information on key topics that the EFN believes are important to share, at a crucial moment. These are seen as a good way to reaffirm EFN views/position on a particular topic next to the EU Institutions and the EU stakeholders. In 2020, the EFN published the following press releases: [High-Level meeting at the European Parliament](#) (February 2020); [EFN-EfCCNa-EuSEN EU Joint Statement on COVID-19 Preparedness and the Urgent Need to Protect Frontline Nurses](#) (March 2020); [Nurses Delivering Direct Patient Care – European Patients' Rights Day](#) (April 2020); [The EFN launches a Campaign on Vaccination](#) (April 2020); [International Nurses Day 2020](#) (May 2020); [EFN & GAMIAN Joint Statement on Nurses Mental Health & Wellbeing](#) (July 2020); [111th EFN General Assembly – October 2020](#) (October 2020); [EFN Executive Committee meets Commissioner Schmit](#) (November 2020); [EFN receives the European Women's Prize](#) (December 2020). All the EFN Press Releases are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=882

■ EFN Policy Statements and Position Papers

The [EFN Policy Statements and Position Papers](#), highlighting the EFN members views on specific issues, and approved by the EFN General Assembly, are crucial for the EFN's lobby work next to the different EU Institutions and EU Stakeholders, and to support the EFN Members in their daily lobby work at national and EU level. In 2020, the EFN members adopted the [EFN Policy Statement on Consequences Nurses Shortages in Public Health](#), and the [EFN Policy Statement on Nurses Contribution to Climate Change](#). All the EFN Policy Statements and Position Papers are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=833

■ EFN inputs to the European Commission and WHO Europe Consultation Processes

In 2020, the EFN inputs to the European Commission Consultation processes related to: [Gender equality & women's rights worldwide – 2021-25 action plan](#) (March 2020); [Women in Politics: overcoming the gender gap](#) (March 2020); [The Commission's Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#) (March 2020); [White Paper on Artificial Intelligence – A European Approach](#) (April 2020); [Civil society organisations and rights defenders on the new European Commission Strategy on the effective application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU](#) (April 2020); [European Strategy for data](#) (May 2020); [New EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#) (June 2020); [WHO Regional Office for Europe - European Programme of Work](#) - [WHO Regional Office for Europe](#) (June 2020); [Pharmaceutical Strategy - Timely patient access to affordable medicines](#) (June 2020); [New Digital Education Action Plan](#) (July 2020); [European Medicines Agencies Network Strategy to 2025](#) (July 2020); [Public Consultation on Maximising accessibility of research results in the fight against COVID-19](#) (September 2020); [Pact for Skills – Stakeholders' survey](#) (September 2020); [The Child Guarantee Targeted Consultations Questionnaire](#) (November 2020); [Health & Safety at Work – EU Strategic Framework \(2021-2027\)](#) (November 2020); [FRA consultation with Fundamental Rights Platform organisations on the impact of measures taken to contain the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (November 2020); [Public consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights – Have your say on reinforcing Social Europe](#) (November 2020). All the EFN contributions to the EU and WHO Europe consultation processes are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=873

■ EFN Reports

The EFN is for long developing reports that supports its lobby work, using all the information available on a topic, including through EFN members approved position papers, General Assembly discussions and approved content, using data collection on the spot and its 'Tour de Table' during its General Assemblies, as a key policy support mechanism to gather data and enable the exchange of best practices among its membership. The policy reports developed from this intelligence gathering are a vital source of factual, comparative data and insights into health and social care in the European Union and Europe. In 2020, the EFN developed several reports on: [European Parliament Event on Digitalisation](#) (February 2020); [European Semester 2016-2020](#) (June 2020); [EFN report on Lessons learned from Ebola & COVID-19](#) (June 2020); [EFN report on Social Media](#) (June 2020); [EFN report on COVID-19 impact on nurses' health & wellbeing - Biological Agent Directive 2020-739](#) (November 2020); [EFN report on COVID-19 crisis management at national level](#) (November 2020). All the EFN reports are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=2198

■ EFN Articles

Publishing [articles](#) is a good way for the EFN to increase the visibility of nurses and the nursing profession at European level, to strengthen the EFN's position on a range of key policy issues, and to increase the impact of the EFN messages and their potential influence on the policy design. In 2020, the EFN published several articles: [Blockchain-based technologies for sustainable EU healthcare ecosystems](#) (January 2020); [Nurses - the Heroes at the Frontline of Healthcare](#) (May 2020); [Following in the Footsteps of Florence: We need better policies to protect nurses at the frontline of crises](#) (May 2020); [EFN articles on Health Europa Quarterly \(H13\) to celebrate International Nurses Day](#) (May 2020); [EFN articles on Health Europa Quarterly \(H14\) special COVID-19](#) (August 2020); [Let's get better prepared for the next health crisis in the EU!](#) (August 2020). All the EFN articles are available at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=2258

■ EFN Briefing Notes

The [EFN Briefing Notes](#), available only to the EFN members via email and/or the members' section of EFN Website, provide specific information on key lobby topics that may influence the EFN members' national policies and daily lobby work. In 2020, the EFN published some Briefing Notes on key items: COVID-19 - EU Lobby Actions and the EU Solidarity Mechanism (April 2020); EU4Health Programme (June 2020); Trio-Presidency Programme (Germany, Portugal, Slovenia) (July 2020); European Research & Innovation Days 2020 (September 2020); The OECD European Commission Report Health at Glance - 2020 and the Nursing Workforce (November 2020). All the EFN Briefing Note are available, only to the EFN Members at: http://www.efnweb.be/?page_id=2295

IX. CONCLUSION

We could never have predicted the challenges that 2020 would bring and we could never anticipate the loss of life and long-term health issues contracted by nurses and colleagues due to COVID-19 while delivering life-saving health care to all citizens in need. Nurses across Europe are respectively owed a debt of gratitude for their selfless commitment and nursing expertise which saved so many lives. COVID-19 brought with it one certainty: **We are not prepared UNLESS we are all prepared!** Since the beginning of this pandemic, nurses' through their relentless commitment have saved countless numbers of lives. Nurses' holistic and altruistic approach to healthcare made respectful and even admirable to citizens. Nurses were labelled as "heroes" by citizens and stakeholders all over the Globe because of the conditions in which they had been approaching their frontline nursing care.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has not only shown that Europe's healthcare systems need to be strengthened to be better prepared to future possible scenarios such as the current pandemic, but that it is crucial to have a public health policy that would be more proactive and involve greater cooperation in order to build healthcare systems that will be resilient and ensure a greater solidarity in Europe. As the European Parliament President, David Sassoli, rightly said in its opening of the Plenary meeting on 13 May *"Our shared duty is to ensure nurses can carry out their work in security and to do so efficiently"*. It is indeed key to have new national and EU strategies to protect our nurses in times of crisis and learn the right lessons for them to be better prepared and trained in the future, putting the right money at the right place, as it is key to foster the co-creation and co-design with frontline nurses of political decision-making processes concerning IDHC preparedness, protocols, training, and selection of appropriate materials.

With this being the "Year of the Nurse and Midwife", the benefits from investing in nurses and nursing were obvious to all those engaged in the healthcare system, both professionals and patients. The EFN and its Members had, and will have, an important role to play in all this debate, and in building different strategic frameworks for action agreed by a large number of stakeholders. As such, in 2021, the EFN will, as did Florence Nightingale, keep on advocating and driving the EU Institutions and health stakeholders for greater involvement of nurses in the co-design of healthcare policies to ensure policies respond to the individuals and societies health needs and support nurses in further supporting and empowering patients.



The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) was established in 1971. The EFN represents over 36 National Nurses Associations and its work has an effect on the daily work of 3 million nurses throughout the European Union and 6 million in Europe. The EFN is the independent voice of the nursing profession and its mission is to strengthen the status and practice of the profession of nursing for the benefit of the health of the citizens and the interests of nurses in the EU and Europe.

Contact Details:

Address: Clos du Parnasse, 11A - 1050 Brussels - Belgium

Tel.: +32 2 512 74 19 - Fax: +32 2 512 35 50

Email: efn@efn.be - Web: www.efnweb.eu

Contact Person: Mr Paul De Raeve, EFN General Secretary

Registration Number: 476.356.013

Transparency Register: 87872442953-08

Follow EFN on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) & [Instagram](#)